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INDIA
IN THE DARK WOOD

BY

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e'en to tell,
It were no easy task, how savage wild
That forest, how robust and rough its growth . . .
But when a mountain's foot I reached,
I looked aloft and saw his shoulders broad
Already vested with that planet's beam,
Who leads all wanderers safe through every way.

DANTE'S *Inferno*, Canto I
(Cary's translation)

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TO

MANY FRIENDS IN INDIA

OF OTHER DAYS AND OF TO-DAY

HONOURED AND BELOVED

23276

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INDIA IN THE DARK WOOD

PART ONE

NON-CHRISTIAN INDIA

CHAPTER I

THE EDUCATED—GROPING

One of the great utterances of India's ancient Scriptures is a prayer, "From darkness lead me to the light." That has been the cry of this people's heart through all the two thousand five hundred years since first the prayer was uttered. There have been many dark periods in their history, and one of the darkest is that through which they are passing to-day. They have before them the task of making over again a social system that through the ages has grown hopelessly corrupt, of recovering a faith to live by that may take the place of their ancient faiths so long followed blindly. And all this has to come to pass in the midst of the clamour and confusion of the rebuilding of the fabric of the state. Through such a jungle this people have to find their way. But with that ancient prayer upon their lips they can go forward unafraid. As Dante found, so will India, that when she looks up she can see the steadfast stars. No one who remembers this people's long and splendid history

can doubt that they will be led out at last from even this darkness into the light.

That history in its origin and through many centuries was and still is, in spite of large non-Hindu elements in the population in more modern times, what we may designate as Hindu. The Hindu civilization has been the moulding and dominant force in the whole land. The study of the modern Indian mind which this book endeavours to present is based upon facts that are mainly facts of Hinduism, the writer having found his main occupation and experience within that region. That need not, however, except in a limited degree, render this study untrue for India as a whole. As far as any generalizations can be made without error and misrepresentation in regard to a land so vast, one may claim that what is true of Hindu India is true of the whole population. It is the Hinduism of past ages that as a subtle, pervasive, powerful influence has made the India of to-day what it is, that has given it its colour and shape and character, that forms its strength, and that to an overwhelming degree will, as far as we can judge, determine its destiny.

I

In an attempt to survey the present religious situation in India it is right that we should begin with the educated classes as those who are most articulate and whose religious attitude we can, accordingly, estimate with most confidence. Those who make up this

section of the population are generally taken by the foreign observer as representing India, and what is called "Indian opinion" is generally the opinion of the English-educated minority. It is only the opinion of two and a half millions out of three hundred and nineteen millions, and yet, as representing those in that immense multitude who are awake and vocal and able to form a judgment, it can fairly enough be described as that which must be reckoned to be the dominant opinion in the land. At the same time it must not be forgotten that in matters of religion this aggressive minority counts for far less than in the political sphere.

We are at a period in the history of this section of the community—generally designated the "intelligentsia"—when pride in India's religious inheritance is giving place to a certain impatience with that whole group of ideas. Twenty years ago it was a commonplace of every patriot to claim that "India holds her torch of spiritual culture to dispel the darkness of the world."[1] And even to-day Professor Radhakrishnan does not hesitate to claim on behalf of Hinduism that it is "a subtly unified mass of spiritual thought and realization."[2]

The old claim to superiority over the materialistic West is still echoed by many, and all the more because they are aware of the encroachment of Secularism and of the emptiness of the claim on many lips. "India's policy is pre-eminently spiritual. . . . The British are materialistic; we are not, and we do not want to

[1] Harendranath Maitra, *Hinduism: the World Ideal*, p. 103.
[2] *The Hindu View of Life*, p. 21.

be. We believe above all in spiritual integrity." [1] This is often a sincere and earnest cry, and no Christian should desire that India should cease to utter it. It is indeed the chief glory of India that in all her history, from the days of Buddha, she has had sons and daughters who were ready to set the claims of the unseen reality above all others, and in the quest for it to forsake all lesser goods. If she is beginning to turn aside from that ideal and to follow the example of the other "poor Indian" who "threw away the pearl richer than all his tribe," then the loss will be not India's only but the world's. For the Christian, the fact that India may with right and in no braggart spirit claim to be the "home of wisdom," as the Indian Christian poet, Narayan Vaman Tilak, claims on her behalf, gives her a peculiar attraction and surrounds her with a special hope. This hope is that, as this Christian poet expresses it, in days to come she will be "enthroned as *guru* of the earth." [2]

What dismays the well-wisher of India at the present hour, however, is to discover indications on every hand that she is abandoning this claim that was for so long her chief pride, and is ranging herself with the materialistic peoples whom she so lately affected to despise. One must do justice to this tendency. It is not necessarily unworthy. Agnosticism is an attitude that we must welcome and respect when it represents a rebellion against unworthy and degrading views of God. Many young people in India, as they review their country's past and consider in how large

[1] *Prabuddha Bharata*, Jan. 1929.
[2] J. C. Winslow, *Narayan Vaman Tilak*, p. 112.

a measure it has been what calls itself religion that has brought them to their present condition, are revolting with violence against all religion, whether true or false. That impulse, blind as it is, we can understand; but at the same time we cannot fail to be aware of its dangers. When recently a Hindu writer in one of the Bombay papers demanded that they should be rid for ever of "that baneful thing called God," was he deposing a false God that he might find room for the true one, or was the empty throne to be occupied by a still more sinister deity, namely, his own evil self?

II

A generation ago the leaders in social and religious reform—at least in Western India—were men who, though they had cast away idolatry and superstition, were yet deeply religious. Even to-day some outstanding figures of that earlier type remain. Notable among them all is M. K. Gandhi, whose shadowy Hinduism is really what we may call an agnostic Theism. He holds, apparently with complete sincerity, to a belief in prayer and the fruits of prayer, and yet his convictions have so little certainty that he feels that it would be wrong even in his heart to desire that anyone should share them. It is easy to see how insecure is the tenure of such a faith as that. To these exceptional men themselves it was not impossible. They listened for God's voice and they heard it, though it might be faintly and, as M. G. Ranade said, "at the end of a long tube."[1] But as the tube lengthens the

[1] James Kellock, *Mahadev Govind Ranade*, p. 145.

voice grows fainter, till it dies away. It is said that in the case of the Brahmos of Bengal the earnestness of their theistic faith seldom lasts beyond the first generation. So also in Western India there is little remaining to-day, as far as one can judge, of the theistic ardour that moved so many of the reforming leaders of thirty years ago. There are not a few who say in their hearts what one wealthy unbeliever has written boldly on the walls of his house, to which he has given the name "Liberty Hall"—"God is nowhere."

It may be maintained that this rebel spirit is manifesting itself only in some provinces of the land and especially in Western India. Perhaps there are qualities in the Maratha that make him more outspoken, more uncompromising in his avowals than the members of some others of the Indian races. But there is evidence that the same cry is coming from educated people throughout the whole land. This is perhaps less true of Bengal than of the other provinces. An experienced observer, judging by the religious response that comes from the Bengali student, pronounces India to be still "incurably religious," but adds that "the old conventional forms have lost hold and there is general bewilderment as to what and how to worship." On the other hand, we cannot forget that the youth of Bengal have been foremost in adopting the creed of violence and the cult of the bomb. With many the religion of patriotic passion has taken possession of the empty shrine and established over their emotional natures its dangerous dominion. We are assured that in Bengal, as well as elsewhere, there

is an anti-religious school who declare that "it is religion that is at fault and if we can only throw it off, we may smile our way to the heaven of our dreams." [1] Turning to South India, we find that there this new movement has founded for itself an organ to which it gives the name *Revolt*, printed significantly in red. We are assured in its columns that "it revolts against both Heaven and Hell, both God and Satan." There is certainly enough in India's social practices, sanctioned and buttressed by religion, to awaken in the minds of the non-Brahmans, whose organ this appears to be, the berserk fury that echoes in its columns. But it is not difficult to perceive the danger when one whose ardour outruns his self-control lays about him with a club. Thus the lurid herald of revolt does not hesitate to find a space in its columns for the views of one for whom marriage—which to the Hindu is a sacrament and irrevocable—bears the resemblance of a mouse-trap and who would radically alter that with the least possible delay.

Perhaps the direction in which a section of educated India appears with such defiant trumpetings to be hastening can best be indicated by the account, given by one who was present, of the religious attitude of a large number of professors gathered recently from all parts of India at an Economic Conference.

On several occasions [he writes] I heard from members of the Conference expressions of contempt and sarcasm used when reference was made to the idea of India's "spirituality." The quality in question seemed to suggest to their minds something which was

[1] *Prabuddha Bharata*, Oct. 1928, p. 434.

merely a hindrance in the way of the accomplishment of their cherished desire for India's future. I also heard an Indian professor tell the following tale with obviously very hearty approval. "A gentleman returned to India after spending some time in Russia. When I met him he was accompanied by his little boy, aged eight. I asked what the boy's name was, and he said it was the old superstitious name, Ramachandra, but he wished it was 'Electricity,' for that was the true God—the material means of wealth and power."

Such a story may appear to us merely ridiculous, and yet it bears startling witness to a spirit that is abroad among the educated people. It is a spirit that, if uncontrolled by any belief in God or duty, and furnished with no Ithuriel's spear to test the false and the true, may render the last state of India worse than the first. Mr M. G. Ranade, perhaps the greatest of all the recent pioneers of reform, claimed thirty years ago for India freedom from the bondage of a blind tradition. But, he said, "the new idea that should take its place is not the idea of rebellious independence and overthrow of all authority but that of freedom responsible to God alone."[1] If, however, God has been dismissed along with all the other trappings of superstition, what can Secularism or Materialism do to stay the headlong downward rush of a half-educated multitude such as we see in India? The sense of this danger has recently moved Mr K. Natarajan, who belongs to the older school of reform and who has given proof of his sincerity and courage by a lifetime of consistent labour in its cause, to utter a warning

[1] Ranade, *Essays in Religious and Social Reform*, p. 175.

against a reckless and ill-considered programme of advance. The examples of Russia and of Turkey, and the ill-fated endeavour of Amanulla of Afghanistan to copy their methods, have infected a certain number with the spirit of revolution, and have at the same time taught others the necessity for prudence and the peril of haste.

Mr M. K. Gandhi has given us a glimpse of the anarchy and chaos which he finds within the soul of young India. Addressing a meeting in Ahmedabad in August 1928, he said: "I am inundated with letters from young men who write frankly about their evil habits and about the void that their unbelief has made in their lives. No mere medical advice can bring them relief. I can only tell them that there is no way but that of surrender to and trust in God and His grace." But to most of them that is now an empty name. The old sanctions are passing and none that can restrain their desires have come to take their place. They are aware, it may be, of the deliverance that has come to them, of the exhilaration of a new-found freedom. They have not yet begun to be fully conscious of their loneliness. That experience awaits them, when they realize that the temple of the spirit possesses no presence that can hallow it or console.

III

Instead we shall find, as we are always finding, that the evil presence that was cast forth presently returns bringing seven others, still more evil. It has always been the case that in India strange and meaningless

cults spring up and spread and then as speedily wither away. What is most significant at the present time is the number of men with degrees attached to their names, indicating an English education, who, having thrown off one superstition, presently submit themselves to another still more gross. There is, for example, in Poona the sect of Baba Jan, an illiterate and half-witted beggar woman who is said to be a hundred and fifty years of age and to be able to raise the dead. She has her educated following. Here again is a Brahman scholar, emancipated from all traditional beliefs and fears, but who when the mystery that lies in wait for us all invades his home and a *polter geist* takes possession, betakes himself to a "Swami" to have the evil presence exorcised. This that is apparent in the East is equally present in the West. Some who have lost all faith there have betaken themselves to necromancy with scarcely less credulity than is to be found in India. Indeed, the Indian "Swami," deceiver or self-deceived or both at once, draws to himself even across the seas his western worshippers.

Perhaps it is not surprising in these circumstances that the framers of the new constitution that India is making for herself have resolved to give no place at all in it to religion. A plague, they say, on all your temples. The Declaration of Fundamental Rights in the Constitution, prepared by a Committee of Congress with Pandit Motilal Nehru as its head, contains this article: "There shall be no State religion for the Commonwealth of India or for any province in the Commonwealth, nor shall the State either directly or

indirectly endow any religion or give any preference or impose any disability on account of religious belief or religious status." There shall at least be no entanglement on the part of the coming India with this dangerous thing, religion.

It would not be fair, indeed, to affirm that the presence of this clause in the Nehru Constitution proceeds from the despair of all religion that we have been describing. There are other reasons as well. The bitter conflict that has arisen between Hindu and Moslem, and the problem of reconciling their antagonisms in a free India, has made it impossible to suggest the establishment of any religion in a position of privilege. At the same time, this fact has made it plain to many that religion, which in past days was the dominant and indispensable element in all their outlook, so that no part of their lives was secular, has become, at the least, a dangerous nuisance.

This attitude on the part of educated India is already widespread; and it seems likely to spread still more widely, in spite of India's pride, until so recently, in her fundamental spirituality. Yet we cannot believe that the country will lightly cast aside a faith in the Unseen and an obedience to its behests that have seemed through so many ages to belong to the very fibre of the Hindu soul. We have noted how, in the case of some of the "educated" people, new superstitions have entered into the vacuum in the soul created by casting forth the old religion, often grosser and more irrational than those which they have replaced. There are others, however, as we must fully recognize, who still seek to retain Hinduism as

their guide in life, selecting from it what they can reverence but casting away its grosser elements, and giving to this new eclectic doctrine the old name. Chief among these, as already mentioned, is Mr M. K. Gandhi, who still claims to be a Hindu though few "Hindu religious heads" would admit his claim, and at least one of them has denounced him as in secret alliance with the Christian missionaries. Mr Gandhi selects the doctrines of the sanctity of all life (*Ahimsa*, "non-killing"), reverence for the cow, and the ancient and uncorrupted form of the system of caste, and, reinterpreting these for himself, declares them to form the pillars of the Hinduism to which he adheres. Others again find in the warmth and sincerity of *bhakti* a theistic faith which even professors of philosophy can accept and—as in the case of some in Western India—in the worship of the idol Vithobā can find solace for their souls.

A striking example of the strange springs at which this inextinguishable thirst for religion seeks satisfaction, after nearly a century of western education, is contained in an account by Mr E. C. Dewick of what he saw at the ancient Hindu festival of Kataragama in Ceylon. At this remote spot in the heart of the jungle twenty thousand people were gathered; among them were officers of Government, some who were pleaders from the Courts, some who had been students at Oxford or the Inns of Court. Mr Dewick asks what it was that drew them to the worship of this deity with its strange and primitive ceremonial reaching back two thousand years. He suggests two reasons which are significant for our study and apply

much more widely than to this particular case. "Partly," he says, "there is the feeling that at Kataragama they are 'one with their people,' sharing in a heritage which is rich with the religious experience of past generations of their forefathers. Partly there is the atmosphere of mystery, which evokes a response in the instincts of most men, even in this rationalistic age, unless such instincts have been deliberately suppressed by conscious effort." [1]

IV

Other methods of reconciling the old doctrine with the demands of the modern mind are also being attempted. Some think that what has been outmoded in Hinduism can be reinterpreted in terms of to-day and adapted to the new times. The central defect of that religion, as thoughtful men and women within its own borders are becoming increasingly aware, is the unethical character of its "spirituality." The *yogi*, freed from desire and attachment, who neither loves nor hates, for whom the wheel of "action" has ceased to revolve: he is the saint of Hinduism. This is an ideal that, according as it is interpreted, may create a very gracious and winning personality, or one that is harsh, repellent, self-sufficient. It sometimes seems as if it was the natural temperament which the individual brought to the doctrine that determined the character of the interpretation. In one case we have the picture, so nearly Christian, of

[1] A privately printed news-letter by the Rev. E. C. Dewick, Literature Secretary of the Y.M.C.A. in India.

the good man as presented by the Maratha poet-saint, Tukaram :

On all alike he mercy shows,
On all an equal love bestows ;

in another we have a famous description of the saint as one who views with an equable indifference "a Brahman, a dog or an outcaste man." [1] One effect of contact with ideals that have come to India from the West has been to create a new sense of responsibility for others, and the attempt has to be made to graft this upon the old stock of Hinduism. As the editor of the organ of the Ramakrishna Mission expresses it, the spiritualization that India requires consists "in learning a wider conception of spirituality," a conception which recognizes fully each man's responsibility for others.

There is no question that, whatever its source, there has come to India in recent years a real awakening to this sense of social dependence and of duty. The work of the Arya Samaj [2] in the North, the self-denying service rendered by many education societies, the work for relief of suffering from flood and famine undertaken by the Servants of India Society, the varied activities in many parts of India of the Ramakrishna Mission—these are only a few indications of a change from a self-centred religiosity to a recognition of the social responsibilities that bind men together into one. It is important in this investigation to try to make clear how far this change has a religious source and motive.

[1] *Bhagavadgītā*, v. 18.
[2] *Samaj*=Church or Society.

Within the past thirty years a change of great significance has come about in the relation of the leaders of the country to this type of service. In the earlier period the notable reformers, whatever the type of religion they professed, were almost all theists. Whether their theism called itself theosophy or whether it was of the Brahmo type or whether it still held to the name of Hinduism, it was in each case a theism which looked far beyond the boundaries of a single land and declared itself for the brotherhood of humanity. It was much more international than national. It is significant to note how largely that type of mind among the awakened classes has disappeared; and how, while a far greater number of educated people realize, or at least acknowledge, a duty to others, it is now a duty within a far narrower range. What has happened is that nationalism has entered into possession of the educated mind of India and has taken the place of religion, if indeed we should not rather say that it has itself become a religion. The result has been a wide extension of the area of this recognition of responsibility for others, but it is a recognition of these others not as fellow-men, children of the same Father, but as fellow-Indians, potential citizens of the state that is to be The more purely spiritual sense of universal human brotherhood has been replaced by a quickened sense, more fully rooted in a natural kinship, of brotherhood within the nation.

This is a change of outlook and of spirit that has had deeply significant consequences. With one or two exceptions there are no longer now, as there were

in earlier days, those outstanding religious reformers and saints to whom the people looked for guidance and whom they reverenced. Instead, among thoughtful people the whole level of consciousness of duty to one's neighbour has been raised. Its range is indeed narrowly limited to the fellow-members of the nation, perhaps even to the fellow-members of a section of the nation. Nationalism has proved the gadfly that has stung many sleepers broad awake. Compassion for the untouchables may be a real compassion, but it has been awakened by a sense that they are brother Indians rather than that they are brother men.

Two examples may be adduced to illustrate how this new spirit operates. The Shuddhi movement shows it at work on behalf of a section of the people as what we may call a Hindu nationalism, accentuating the schisms within the nation. The aim of this movement is to restore to Hinduism those, mostly belonging to the most despised classes, who in the past, either by their own choice or under compulsion, abandoned Hinduism and adopted another religion. The great majority of these had become Moslems. The word Shuddhi means " purification," and what is now being attempted is to bring back these lost sheep into the fold of Hinduism, to " purify " them and even admit them, though they may have been outcastes before, into caste privileges. If this movement could be said to have a truly religious motive behind it, it would be of the highest significance as indicating a genuinely religious quickening within Hinduism. It seems, however, very doubtful if this can be claimed for it. Shuddhi as a movement goes along with what

is called Sangathan, and aims at rallying the forces of Hinduism and unifying them, and so strengthening the Hindu community as over against other communities. Both Shuddhi and Sangathan have to be understood in their relation to the communal conflicts and especially the conflicts between the Hindus and the Moslems, which have become so bitterly aggravated in recent years.

Moslems have responded to the Hindu Shuddhi movement with more vigorous efforts to win outcastes over to the brotherhood of Islam. One result of this is that in several Hindu states, such as Bikanir and Gwalior, laws have been passed bringing "conversion" from one religion to another under strict regulation;[1] while another result of a grimmer kind has been the murder by a Moslem fanatic of an Arya Samaj leader who was notably active in the work of "purification." That cannot be evidence of any really religious earnestness which aims at strengthening Hinduism only in the sense of increasing the numbers of Hindus in such a province as the Punjab and so obtaining greater political power, or in the sense signified by the phrase used by a President of the Hindu Mahasabha, the most influential of the Hindu organizations, when he spoke of the need for "toning up Hindu muscles." It is for a secular and political conflict and no spiritual warfare that Hinduism desires reinforcement. Compassion for the outcaste has little place in these schemes.

The case is altogether different, however, in another example which we may adduce. Mr Gandhi has

[1] In the case of Gwalior the law has since been withdrawn.

given every proof of his sincerity in seeking to help the poor and to set the outcastes free; and of the moral and religious earnestness that moves him in his campaign there cannot be a moment's question. What is true of him is true also of some at least of those who follow him. In South India one of his most loyal and consistent disciples has established a Gandhi Ashram, a settlement of a group of earnest men in one of the poorest village areas. Their primary aim is to help the humblest and most needy of the village people by teaching them to spin and so to fill their idle hours and supplement their miserably inadequate means of subsistence. They also by precept and example seek to bring to an end the custom of untouchability: they live among the people and minister to their needs. They do not attempt, nor apparently desire, to change the largely animistic Hinduism that the village people practise. Their leader indeed maintains—and in this he has Mr Gandhi's full concurrence [1]—that it is wrong even to desire that any one should change his religion, though it should be no more than what appears to us a gross animism. He affirms that when these village people worship a painted stone they have before them a high conception of a God who is one, and who is holy and loving. However difficult it may be for us to conceive how anyone can sincerely persuade himself to such a belief, there can be no doubt that along with the

[1] Mr Gandhi made this statement at Sabarmati in a discussion on the subject between followers of various religions. He refused to modify his view even in the case of the animistic worships of the hill-people.

nationalism that moves these men to say in their hearts as they look at the poor village people, " Yes, they are my brethren, hence this rage and sorrow," there is also in their hearts a true religious faith, whatever its source or object, which constrains them to their life of sacrifice. India's educated classes have discovered for themselves the compelling power of a new affection, and in the case of many of them we may believe that in their love for their nation and for their kinsfolk within the nation they are reaching out to a love for God.

V

The new psychological climate which nationalism has created has affected and in some cases seriously weakened the older religious movements of reform. While the Arya Samaj has adjusted itself without difficulty to the new situation, this has not been so in the case of the Brahmo and the Prarthana Samajes. The new fervour of patriotic passion does not harmonize easily with the love of truth for its own sake which has been the ideal of these more cosmopolitan Churches. A minor indication of the altered attitude that nationalism creates even in religion is the fact that texts such as " God is love," which formerly hung upon the walls of the place of worship of the Bombay Prarthana Samaj, have been replaced by quotations from Indian Scriptures. The Arya Samaj can never be said to have possessed the breadth and comprehensiveness of religious outlook of these other Samajes. The strength of its leaders, as far as one can judge,

was never as truly rooted in religious faith. Certainly to-day we may quite confidently affirm of it that it has placed itself at the service of the political and national movement. It serves the cause of education ; it seeks to uplift the oppressed : but it does these things at the bidding of love of the motherland, rather than of a love of men as children of God.

We shall find striking evidence of the change of view in regard to religion that is so widely prevalent in educated circles if we consider in more detail what one of the newest sects—the Ramakrishna Mission—sets before itself as its religious aim, and what it recognizes as the hostile spirit abroad in the land that it has especially to combat. It is a religious group, originating in Bengal and exercising considerable influence at the present time. The leaders of the sect appear to be fully aware of the dangers that threaten religion and of the need of " reconditioning " Hinduism, so as to enable it successfully to overcome them and thus to win the people back to their ancient allegiance. As we have already seen, one of the principal aims that the Mission sets before itself is to widen the range of the traditional spirituality of India and to bring it out from its isolation into the stream of life. The conception of what spirituality involves is enlarged so as to include renunciation and service rendered for the good of others. It continually emphasizes its religious springs, and looks back for its inspiration to the ancient Scriptures, as well as to Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. Its doctrine is essentially pantheistic, but it has endeavoured to readjust itself to suit the conditions of

a world in which conscience and duty are recognized to have their claims.

Thus this sect has sought to adapt its teaching to the times, while at the same time it is conscious of a change in the spirit of present-day India against which it is continually protesting. "Whither India?" it asks in its organ, the *Prabuddha Bharata*, and its answer is that unless India changes its course it will find itself presently to be as materialistic as its most hardened contemporaries in the West. "What is that *mantram*," asks Swami Ashokananda, "that will make the three hundred million hearts beat in unison? The Bolshevik ideal? The lure of material prosperity? The hatred of Indian ideals? The hatred of the British? We do not hear our 'leaders' speak anything of this secret of unity. We shall tell them that secret. *It is religion.* . . . Let us warn our 'leaders' that this is the only way to unite the people and make them strong, and any serious interference with true religion will neither help them nor the people. It is a vain hope to find any other basis of national unity than spirituality." The Ramakrishna sect is thus fully aware of the perils of the times, and it is striving earnestly to restore the prestige of the old religious tradition made over again to fit the needs and the demands of a new day in an India which cannot be content with the ideal of *Sannyasa*, of indifference to the woes of a world of illusion.

Can the old garment be thus patched, or shall we only see the rent made worse than before? God, according to Sri Ramakrishna, is like the chameleon that constantly changes his colour. An ever-varying

God and an adjustable religion: that is possible in the case of such a pantheism as this sect inherits, but its ethical character can hardly be said to be deeply rooted. The slogan, "Be gods and make gods," embodies their aim, we are told, but a god, according to their idea of him, is too chameleon-like in hue for us to be confident of the colour of the India which they are fashioning. At the same time we have to recognize that this sect is making an attempt which must be made if the heritage of Hinduism is to remain a living and operative tradition and not mere lumber in the cellars of the soul of an India given over to the pursuit of what that tradition scorns as phantasm. It has yet to be seen whether this new Vedanta has within it the vital energy that can make India rise again from the dead and live by the power of an endless life. We may well doubt whether a doctrine so supple and malleable, so ready to assume a virtue if it has it not, can create the strength of character which alone can withstand the inroads of secularism and materialism, and give proof of the vital energy which a true spirituality can create.

There are all the time all over India those who are conscious that nothing less than the moral majesty of Jesus and the strength that He gives can suffice for them and for their land. The followers of Ramakrishna, it is true, and indeed their master himself, are willing to give a place to Jesus among the personalities they reverence. This is part of the suppleness of their pantheism and may explain the fact that in Bengal, where this sect had its origin and finds still its largest following, there is perhaps more appear-

ance at least of hospitality to Christ and His message than in other provinces of India. It may well be doubted whether the request to be allowed to partake of the central Christian sacrament, which some of the leaders of this sect are said not long ago to have made, can be interpreted as indicating an attraction to Christ such as we desire and hope for. To Sri Ramakrishna's hospitable pantheism God is accessible through many doors and is present alike in the evil and the good. His monistic teaching was at first repellent to his disciple, Swami Vivekananda, who would say to him, " It is a sin to say that man is God Himself," [1] but when the disciple was converted he took in hand the task of re-fashioning the old doctrine as what he called " practical Vedanta." This is the faith that to him seemed destined to become the future religion of mankind.

VI

A complete abandonment of all religion, a vague but humanitarian agnosticism, a religion of patriotism, a Hinduism moralized and brought up to date : these appear to be some of the paths in the dark wood that the educated classes in India are pursuing. There are others besides these. Those who are following these new paths—even the atheists among them—are those for whom religion is a real concern. Even to have cast it away with violence is an indication that much was hoped for from it, much desired. But there are many, even among those who claim to be

[1] *Prabuddha Bharata*, Jan. 1929, p. 45.

educated and who have read something of Milton and Burke and know the names of Mill and Herbert Spencer, who nevertheless worship the old gods and follow the old practices. It may be, and no doubt is in most cases, mere sluggishness of mind that is the cause, or it may be self-interest or cowardice. To tear up the ancient, gnarled and stubborn root of Hinduism, so deeply implanted within the soul and within the social order—there could hardly be a harder task set to a sincere man than that. It can hardly be accomplished without tragedy. Were Hinduism no more than a creed accepted by the reason and the heart, this might be less so, but Hinduism is much more than that. It is a system that regulates the life in every detail from birth and before birth, and on to death and long thereafter. No wonder there are many who consider conformity the course not only of prudence but of wisdom. When a young Hindu woman was recently married to a Moslem fellow-student this was not considered their private business, something for themselves alone to decide. Their act was an assault on the whole social order: it meant "red ruin and the breaking up of laws." Accordingly, public meetings of protest were held and resolutions of violent denunciation passed by their fellow-students. When Mr Gandhi took the desperate step of freeing from its sufferings an unhappy calf to which life was a burden, public gatherings of Hindus fiercely denounced his attack upon the Hindu religion, and his "illogical and irreligious views." When it was proposed to have common drinking vessels for children of all castes in Bombay municipal schools, the forces

of "religion" were once more mobilized in protest. The foundations of Hindu orthodoxy are too deeply laid in the whole structure of society to be easily disturbed. The tremendous force of tradition, of conservatism, of prejudice, is arrayed against the rebel or the innovator. Is it any wonder that so many follow the easy path of acquiescence? The blame is cast upon "these ignorant females," and at the bidding of the Moloch of tradition, or of what is alleged to be Hinduism, even in the home of an educated father little girls must still suffer because of the custom of "pre-puberty marriage," widows are still dedicated to misery.

To the rescue of this threatened order, reinforcing the battalions of obscurantism already so well entrenched, there has now come a new ally in the shape of nationalism and patriotic pride. The gods of the old order have become the flags of national or of communal patriotism. In Bengal the cult of the bloodthirsty Kali has been revived, and for a time at least became part of the creed that bound together the emotional students of the province in the cause of the motherland. So in the Bombay Presidency the astute designs of the popular leader, Mr B. G. Tilak,[1] found in the worship of Ganesh a centre round which the patriotic ardour of the educated youth could gather, and made use of the songs sung at his festival to kindle and inflame the passion of their hearts. That was twenty years ago, and still to-day to many an

[1] Mr B. G. Tilak was for many years the most powerful popular leader in Western India, and indeed in the whole land. He underwent a term of six years' imprisonment for sedition.

educated young man the worship of the old gods is a part of the cause of India that he must champion, and he joins the patriotic chorus crying, "Up with Hinduism." So it came about not long ago that a college in Calcutta went on strike in protest because the students were not permitted to worship the goddess Saraswati in their college hostel. Those who forbade them were not foreigners or Christians, but fellow-Hindus and Brahmos[1]: nor, we may be sure, were they themselves ardent devotees. They refused to continue their studies, they sacrificed their academic careers, not for the sake of this Hindu deity, but of their country which had assumed for them this guise. In Bangalore a few months later a similar insurgence of passion was aroused. The god on this occasion was Ganpati, but the cause he represented to the students who fought for his reinstatement in his shrine was not Mother India, but the Hindu community, slighted and insulted, as they thought, by their Moslem countrymen. This was a narrower patriotism, but it too, as India gives us to-day lamentable proof, can stir fanatical passion and cause much blood to flow.

The religious instinct, so strong in the youth of India, whether educated or uneducated, can, when it is thwarted or starved or finds no worthy object to which it can attach itself, assume such evil and such dangerous shapes. It may also be overwhelmed and submerged by other engrossing interests, as is so largely the case with the Indian students at the present time. The question of their country's future so absorbs these young men that there is scarcely room

[1] Reforming Hindus of the Brahmo (theistic) Church.

within their ardent minds for any other thought. There is only one concern that has a prior claim to their attention, and that is the means of their subsistence. Even the patriot must live, and the straits to which the educated youth are often reduced that they may make a living sometimes extinguish in them alike religion and patriotism. It is impossible in a survey of the religious gropings of the educated classes to omit reference to the fact that there are circumstances in India, largely economic, that affect them more than any other class and that render them disappointed and disillusioned, indifferent to religion and to every higher aspiration of their natures. Whatever produces that temper in the young too often blinds the eyes of their souls. That there has been much in the public life of India in recent years to cast her youth into despair no one who has watched the development of the situation can have failed to note. High political hopes have been awakened and have not been realized. Dissension has brought bitter disappointment. There has been little inspiring leadership which could win the devotion of young hearts. The future has shown them no shining hope and the present has offered them few satisfying material rewards. The heart has remained empty and too often the stomach has remained empty too. An Indian observer of exceptional insight and sympathy sums up the situation in this aspect of it as follows :

Swarajya[1] and nationalism have absorbed the minds of the educated youth, and religion has been thrust into the background. One need not mind that

[1] The demand for self-government.

this should be so, had the movement continued to be healthy. But there have been bitter and repeated disappointments during the last few years. Enthusiasm has waned; confidence and mutual trust have decreased and pessimism is spreading. Economic causes—the unemployment among the educated classes—are accentuating the situation. Such an atmosphere is not favourable for religious growth.

A few facts will indicate how hard life must be for many educated young men and how difficult it must be in such circumstances to keep their ideals high. In the Madras Presidency, as a Commission on Unemployment recently reported, twice as many educated and partially educated young men as can be absorbed are being thrown every year upon the labour market. In Travancore, a large area in South India, the approximate number of unemployed graduates is fifty-five per cent of the total number, while there are three times as many educated people seeking employment as there are posts that they can hold. A similar situation is to be found all over India, with results that are cruelly distressing to great numbers of those who might be expected to be leaders of their country in every good cause. "It is impossible," writes an experienced ex-official, "to understand the attitude of the average educated Indian of to-day without realizing that somewhere in the background of his life there are nearly always several hungry nephews and cousins, continually drifting into or out of badly paid clerkships."[1] Sir M. Visvesvarayya, speaking out of a long and varied experience, pronounces this

[1] *An Indian Commentary*, by G. T. Garratt (I.C.S., retired), pp. 81 *et seq.*

judgment: "The general outlook upon life in India, as things are now, is too gloomy to permit of any sound individual or social development." [1] The Bolshevik declares that religion is opium for the masses, and it might well be that men in this unhappy plight in India would resort to such an opiate: but no one can expect that in such a condition they will give themselves to the pursuit or the discovery of new truth. Worn out and disappointed, they will resign themselves rather to lethargy and despair.

VII

There is, however, in India, as everywhere, one way of hope that is open to them to take, and which beckons especially to the despairing. The belief that Christianity has a message of deliverance draws men to it even in their darkest hour. In this period of perplexity and bewilderment in India it would be strange if there were not those who turned their eyes in this direction also. Even while the prejudices of nationalism blind and distort the vision of so many, the light that is Christ Jesus has not ceased to shine nor the graciousness of His life to win men's hearts. Dr Stanley Jones [2] has marshalled from his own study of the mind of educated India—and no one else can speak out of so varied an experience of it—evidence of the attraction that Jesus Christ exercises over many in every province of the land. We are told that the main reason why those who are so attracted do not

[1] *Reconstructing India.*

[2] In *The Christ of the Indian Road* and *Christ at the Round Table.*

often openly profess their faith in Christ is political. They are more powerfully constrained by love of their land than—as yet, at least—by love of Christ and by the power over them of His truth. There is, however, the free acknowledgment of the nobility of His ethics; and in India, just as in every land, the loftiness of the standard of the Sermon on the Mount is acknowledged —and ignored. The most striking instance of this acknowledgment is the fact that Mahatma Gandhi himself in his Ashram at Sabarmati was recently requested by his students, and willingly consented, to study with them this supreme manual of conduct. It is true that the teaching of Jesus is for most of those who admire it little more than a remote ideal. It has not in their case "laid hold of the heart," and it has not done so because Christ in the gracious majesty of His personality has not yet been fully disclosed to them. There is a story that a Scottish evangelist used to tell of a woman from the Scottish Highlands who came to one of his revival meetings and when pressed to submit herself to Christ replied with some impatience, "My mother has been praying for me among the hills for fifty years, and do you suppose that I can be converted in five minutes?" Something of the same thought comes to us when we think of India and long that her educated sons should give themselves into the keeping of the Lord Jesus Christ. Their ancestors have been praying and musing in their desert solitudes for two thousand years, and can we demand that they should submit to a sudden change of the context and the deep-dyed colour of their thought? As one of their Christian friends and

teachers puts it, " They are on the march, and God is their leader, and we need not be too anxious to hurry the pace." [1]

We can indeed already perceive clearly enough tokens of their forward movement. It is true that twenty or thirty years ago acknowledgment of their debt to Christian teaching and Christian example was much more freely made by religious and social reformers than would be made to-day. This is partly due to the awakened pride in their own heritage which makes the patriot unwilling to admit that he is forced to borrow from any foreign source. But there are other reasons as well. As a matter of fact Christian sentiment has become so widely diffused in educated India that it is scarcely realized not to be a native product. Nor have we any right to claim it always as Christian. A more diligent scrutiny of their own ancient religious possessions has discovered that they are richer than had been supposed. The Christian will not dispute as to the source of India's new discovery of duty, so long as duty is recognized and followed. " We rejoice to think," says the Jerusalem Council, " that, just because in Jesus Christ the light that lighteneth every man shines forth in its full splendour, we find rays of that same light where He is unknown or even rejected." [2]

Many a man for Christë's love
Was martyred in Romayne,
Ere ever He was known there
Or His name honoured.

[1] John M'Kenzie in *The Christian Task in India*, p. 97.
[2] *The World Mission of Christianity*, p. 14.

The pioneers of education in Western India: D. K. Karve spending his strength in self-forgetting toil for the widows; A. V. Thakkar working for the elevation of the Bhils; C. Rajagopalachari spreading the cult of the spinning wheel, that the poor peasant may have a little more to eat; Dr S. Muthulakshmi Reddi striving to lift the temple women from their slough: these may not have followed Christ along the Via Dolorosa or carried any very heavy cross of sacrifice, but they have indeed followed Him, even if it has been afar off and without knowing who was their Leader. The spirit of Christ is alive in many hearts in India to-day, and though they may say, "Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered?" and may, indeed, refuse to call Him Lord, it is by the fruits their lives bear that they will be judged. It is not our part to appraise the value of the work of D. K. Karve in behalf of the unhappy widows of India as compared with the similar work of the Christian, Pandita Ramabai, to whom he owes, as he admits, so much of his inspiration. We have no right to determine whether Dr Muthulakshmi Reddi or Miss Amy Carmichael has done more to bring deliverance to the unhappy temple-prostitute. There is Another who will judge these matters, who is neither of the East nor of the West. But that a new spirit is abroad in India, a spirit of compassion and of moral purpose, and that it is bringing continually wider areas of the Indian mind under its influence, no one can doubt.

CHAPTER II

THE ILLITERATE MASSES—STIRRING IN THEIR SLEEP

I

It is comparatively easy to form a judgment of the movements that are stirring among the educated classes. These classes at the present time are vocal, almost to the extent of clamour, and, while it is on political subjects that they express themselves most loudly and unmistakably, it is not difficult to judge of the religious currents that at the same time are affecting their thinking and controlling their lives. When one passes to an endeavour to form an estimate of the direction of the much more slowly-moving religious forces that control the common people, it is immensely harder to come to any assured conclusions. The sun rises and sets upon the same scenes and the same sorrows hidden within thousands of grass huts to-day as were hidden there centuries before the coming of Christ. The peasant drives out his cattle in the morning to the bare fields: he ploughs and harrows with the same rude implements to-day as then, with the same sense of hunger in his body, and, if perhaps he gives thought to it, in his soul. His wife at home bows herself, as in the days of Buddha, to her bondage to "three crooked things"—"the quern,

the mortar and her crook-backed lord." [1] There is little room for religious aspiration, one would think, in such a life. And yet, religion has always exercised over them a power, often grim and harsh and merciless, but sometimes moving and consoling. If the money-lender is one figure seldom far removed from the fears and anxieties that journey out with the farmer each morning to his fields and that return with him each night, the "holy man" is another scarcely less to be feared. "First food, then worship," says one of their proverbs, for the two most powerful motives in this land, a land ruled by Shiva, the destroyer, are the needs of the hungry stomach and of the hungry heart. This "Great God," Mahadeva, whose rule is most widely of all acknowledged from Kailasa to Comorin, is the symbol of submission to the order of nature in all its inevitableness and terror :

> . . . *that millions perish, each hour that flies,*
> *Is the mystic sign of my sacrifice.*[2]

Aware as they must be of the terrors of "the Terrible One," in a land that has a full share of the desolation wrought by a pitiless climate and by the cruelty of man, they cling at the same time to the inextinguishable hope of the coming of an unseen Friend. The cries to God that have risen from so many insatiable hearts, the paths furrowed by the feet of pilgrims as they have journeyed to countless shrines in quest of consolation, the songs, rare but not unknown, of those whose hearts have reached

[1] *Psalms of the Sisters*, Mrs Rhys Davids, p. 15.
[2] *Verses written in India*, Sir Alfred Lyall, p. 99.

some haven: these tell of experiences of the soul of India that have never been absent through all the ages and have brought to some their compensation for the sorrows of a life of toil and poverty. "Ah, restless mind!" cries Lal Ded, a Kashmiri beggar woman, "have no fear within thy heart. The Beginningless One Himself taketh thought for thee, and considereth how thy hunger shall fall from thee."[1] And Kabir (or someone, perhaps, writing in the name of the weaver-saint) can ask triumphantly:

How could the love between me and Thee sever? . . .
Kabir says, "As the river enters into the ocean, so my heart touches Thee."[2]

These are old cries and old woes. Is this India the same to-day as it was when Buddha meditated and when Avvai, the Tamil poetess, a pilgrim and the child of pilgrims, "sang for a cup of porridge"?

II

To attempt to answer this question is for anyone, and especially for a foreigner, a task of extraordinary difficulty. Prejudice, national pride, political propaganda are all engaged on one side or another in setting up a case rather than in impartial investigation of the facts. Has the lot of the Indian peasant grown harder or easier with the coming to the land of the commerce of the West? Did the rule of the

[1] *Poems by Indian Women*, edited by Margaret Macnicol, p. 52.
[2] *One Hundred Poems of Kabir*, Rabindranath Tagore, pp. 40 *et seq.*

Mogul place an easier yoke on the neck of the village people than " the benign rule " of the British imperial power ? No one can deny that the *pax Britannica* has changed the whole Indian scene from the days when Moguls and Marathas fought each other and laid the country waste, when Pindaris and Dacoits and Thugs lay in wait for the traveller, and when, with the failure of the rains, famine and starvation came and there was nothing to be done but die. But, on the other hand, there are those who urge that the price of peace has been too heavy, that the back of the peasant is bowed beneath the burden of the cost of administration, that the land is being steadily drained of its former wealth. Probably the historical materials that come down to us from the past are too scanty, and in the absence of them our prejudices on one side or the other are too strong, to permit us to reach an assured conclusion. At the same time it can hardly be questioned that India is being governed as never before—though, it may be, at a heavy cost —in the interest of the great body of the people and with a view primarily to their prosperity. Nor can it very well be questioned, on the other hand, that the invasion of India by the commerce and industry of the West, the bewildering change that has come upon her in the last fifty years, throwing her open to the markets of the world, has brought to her new and bitter woes. It may be that the sorrows of " civilization " are as hard to bear as those of barbarism. Certainly the readjustment of a primitive people to such new conditions as have suddenly arisen in India cannot but be a sore as well as a lingering process.

It is not, however, with these questions that we have here primarily to deal. They are secondary in our investigation to those which concern the religious attitudes and interests of those multitudes whose thoughts appear to us so difficult to gauge. Their physical circumstances are of importance to us chiefly as influencing their inner life and as supplying, perhaps, a clue to its comprehension. The overwhelming majority of them are attached to the soil and make their living by its cultivation. The last Census shows that over seventy-three per cent of the population of British India were directly engaged in, or dependent on, agricultural and pastoral pursuits. It is misleading to speak of them as farmers; the word suggests a position far beyond their reach. Let us select from the recent report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture some sentences which will indicate the physical and economic conditions under which they live:

In the South and East the average holding is about five acres, and elsewhere not more than half the holdings exceed this limit.[1] . . . Under the prevailing system of tillage, the small holdings do not provide occupation for more than half the time of the cultivator. . . . For the most part the people belong to families that have lived within the same village for generations past; their holdings are inherited from their fathers before them, and have been divided or aggregated as the descendants of a common ancestor have increased

[1] "There seems to be a consensus of opinion that for growing the ordinary grain crops fifteen acres of dry land is about the minimum upon which a man can live decently, unless he has some secondary occupation."—Garratt, *An Indian Commentary*, p. 28.

or decreased in numbers. . . . The result of repeated partition among heirs is a persistent tendency to a subdivision of holdings. . . . Illiterate himself [the average Indian cultivator] has, as a rule, no one in his village to whom he can turn for advice. In the vast majority of villages he does not want, because he has never known, such amenities as modern sanitation, pure drinking water, or skilled medical aid. He regards visitations of epidemics as part of the natural order of the world. . . . The typical cultivator is, within the sphere of his experience, self-reliant, and both his methods of cultivation and his social organization exhibit that settled order which is characteristic of all countries in which the cultivating peasant has long lived in, and closely adapted himself to, the conditions of a particular environment.[1]

But, of course, the cultivating classes, greatly as they preponderate in this land, are not the sole constituents of those vast hordes whom we describe as the illiterate masses. India is indeed, as we have to remind ourselves so often, a land of villages, but others besides the cultivators of the soil live in these villages. There are artisans who make and repair the simple implements that the cultivator requires; there are shopkeepers who sell him grain and vegetables and lend him money on usury; there are barbers, perhaps, and weavers and potters; there are those whose business is to tend the temple or the mosque; and there are, outside the village, but not far off, the "untouchables" or outcastes. The last-named group alone are said to number at least fifty-two millions.

[1] *Report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture in India*, pp. 5 *et seq.*, and 478 *et seq.*

And, further, in addition to these there are the industrial classes, a growing population, mostly herded together in or near the cities, often in conditions of extreme squalor and overcrowding. The total number of those employed in industries in India at the time of the last Census (1921) was 2,681,000, of whom less than a million and a half work in factories. A large proportion of these come from among the agricultural population, being driven in many cases to supplement the meagre subsistence obtained from the land by work in the mills of the cities. "Seventy-five per cent of the labour employed in the fifteen large sugar mills in Bihar and Orissa is agricultural." [1] The effect upon the peasant of such seasonal migrations into the cities and similar and more sorrowful migrations in search of work and food in seasons of scarcity may be, as the Agricultural Commission urges, in some respects beneficial to them in "introducing new ideas into the countryside," but we have to remember that these new ideas are often far from being "uplifting." What can they learn that is likely to benefit body or soul when they pass from the wide spaces of their Deccan fields to the chawls of Bombay? Huddled in one-room houses, up innumerable stairs, their children playing in the crowded streets, they themselves tempted to find the shortest road out of their misery in the drink-shop—can anyone maintain that the benefits from such an exchange outweigh the degradation it inflicts upon them? Economic necessity may compel such migrations; but it ought not to be necessary that anyone should have to choose

[1] *Agricultural Commission Report*, p. 576.

between death by starvation and the misery of the slum.

These facts may help to suggest some of the conditions in which the masses of the humble people of India have to live and to find leisure and inclination to cultivate their spiritual instincts. Would it be any wonder if in their thoughts "Potobā" took precedence—as they are ready to confess is the case—of "Vithobā," that is to say, if the demands of an empty stomach seemed to them more urgent than those that are laid on them by the gods? And yet it would be by no means just to them to make any such generalization. It is impossible, indeed, to expect courageous thinking and the spirit of adventure in the quest for truth among those who, as is the case with so many in every province of the land, are racked and debilitated by recurrent inroads of malaria. The estimate made by the Health Department of the Government of the number of deaths each year from this disease alone is one million, and "for one million deaths in adult males between fifteen and fifty years of age, there should be at least two millions constantly sick and the equivalent of fifty million admissions to hospital." No estimate can be formed of the drain of mental energy that these figures involve. And yet malaria is by no means the only disease that is bleeding India white and sapping the vitality—mental and moral as well as physical—of her people. "How can I expect anyone to heed and to accept the message that I preach to him," asks a missionary, "if hookworm all the time is robbing him of his power to think or to resolve?" "The percentage loss of efficiency,"

according to identical resolutions passed in 1924 and 1925 by the All-India Conference of Medical Research Workers, " of the average person in India from preventible malnutrition and disease is not less than twenty per cent. . . . The Conference is absolutely certain that the wastage of life and efficiency which results from preventible disease costs India several hundred crores of rupees every year." Rupees are wholly incommensurate with such a " wastage " as is there indicated, and no calculus can measure the loss to India in spiritual capacity and character that these figures imply.

And yet, as we have said, in spite of malnutrition and disease and poverty the soul of India is not dead. A notorious indictment of India issued a few years ago pointed to the land as " a breeding ground of disease " constituting a world-peril, and seemed to suggest that such a dying race were better left to die. Is that all that is to be said? Are squalor and disease and malnutrition a suitable environment to create and to maintain a true religious life? Shall we not rather say that a people in whom, in spite of these enemies of all higher living, the soul has not died nor the flame of religious aspiration been extinguished, must be possessed of a religious nature of extraordinary tenacity and strength? It is true that religion of a kind may flourish in a region of terror and calamity and death, and it is necessary that, before we pronounce judgment upon the religious quality of this people, we should have some conception of the character of the beliefs upon which, in the midst of such hostile influences, their souls have been sustained.

III

What is the religion of the Indian peasant? The first fact that has to be recognized as formative of the common Hindu's conception of duty and obligation, and as fashioning his way of life, is his station within the caste system and his blind obedience to its requirements. Even the Bhagavadgitā, the most influential among the enlightened classes of all Hindu Scriptures, lofty in many respects as is the doctrine that it teaches, is not able to look beyond those iron limits. The *Dharma* that it enjoins is not "duty" in our wide sense of the word, though it is often so translated; it is the maintenance of the divine society, of the system of graduated and rigidly separated groups that make up the organization of caste, and that holds, in a grip that is only very slowly relaxing, high and low, educated and ignorant. Least of all can the poor peasant break its bonds. We know how strong in the past has been the power in the English village of the social regulation:

> *Respect the Squire and his relations*
> *And keep yourselves in your proper stations,*

but this cannot be compared with the implacable rigour of the scheme of Hindu caste demands, with their inviolable laws and their religious sanctions. That is what constitutes orthodoxy, and the citadel of orthodoxy is the sluggish and tenacious mind of the Indian villager. Can he be expected to take the road of reform, when even to-day one of the most

outstanding and ablest leaders among the "intelligentsia," Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, one who claims to be a friend of the outcaste, reaffirms this old doctrine of despair—"Lord Krishna has said that the best way of worshipping him by a man is by performing the duties which devolve upon him by birth." So the masses of the people, bowing to the ancient rule, resume their places as cogs in this cruel system, and custom rules their lives and blinds the eyes of the soul.

This is the dominant fact in the lives of the great body of the people of India. So long as that remains there can hardly be in them any openness of mind to new ideas, any spirit of adventure in the quest of God. What things have been they remain and must remain to the end. Lethargy possesses the spirit of the people; submission to the routine that has come down to them from the past is the one virtue. The sole interpreters of the laws that rule their lives are the Brahmans who are still in the villages scarcely less than human gods and exercise a unique power for good or evil. Tulsi Das was the author in the sixteenth century of a poem on the story of Rāma which still exercises a powerful influence in North India and an influence on the side, one might suppose, of an emancipating religion. Yet even to him the Brahman is "the very root of the tree of piety, the destroyer of sin." "A Brahman," he says, "must be honoured though devoid of every virtue and merit, but a Sudra [1] never, though distinguished for every virtue and learning." "My soul is disturbed by one

[1] A member of one of the lower castes.

fear," he adds, "the curse of the Brahman is something most terrible."

It is seldom that that potent curse is defied by the village people. But to-day in some areas there is an insurgence of the peasantry against this dominance. It is a movement that is economic and political rather than religious, but that may in time have religious consequences. In some districts where the Brahman is the landlord and thus both his temporal and spiritual lord, and the peasant has had to cultivate his fields for him for a pittance that he finds insufficient to his needs, he has learned to make use of the secular weapon of the strike, and the fields have lain untilled. In the Madras Presidency the insurrection of the non-Brahman has assumed a political form and has been to such an extent successful that the Brahman has been, for a time at least, deposed from the political power that he had come to reckon as his own prerogative. This has been due, no doubt, to the fact that in that province the higher circles of the non-Brahmans are numerous and influential and have among them a large proportion of educated people, while on the other hand the Brahmans have exercised their spiritual authority with an arrogance and an inhumanity that have stirred even the passive spirit of the Hindu to revolt.

At the other extreme of the social organization of the village and so far beneath the Brahman as scarcely to come within his cognizance at all are the outcastes. They are treated as "untouchable," that is to say, their touch and even their shadow causes pollution to a man of high caste, whether he be a Brahman, or a

member of any of the numerous cultivating classes in the villages, or anyone indeed who can reckon himself as within the Hindu pale, as the " untouchables " are not. These victims of a merciless social order are forbidden even to live within the village precincts ; they dare not take water from the village wells, even though this should mean, as it might when the rains fail, that they should die of thirst ; they are in no circumstances permitted to cross the threshold of a Hindu temple. They often eat carrion, and an old story is told in the traditions of the *bhakti* movement in Western India of how an " untouchable " saint was assisted by Vishnu himself, incredible as it may appear, in dragging away the carcass of a cow, these carcasses being the perquisite of such unfortunates as he. It is almost always the case that the cruelty and injustice that create such an attitude as this have their reactions upon those who practise them. So it comes about that the tyrant himself becomes afraid of his victims. It is evident that they are viewed at times as in league with dangerous demons and requiring to be propitiated. For example, when there is an eclipse of the moon, that is to say, when, according to the popular notion, a great demon is threatening to devour the moon, the members of one of those outcaste groups go from house to house, crying, " Give us a gift and we shall have the moon set free." The high caste Hindus accordingly propitiate them with gifts, evidently because they are supposed to have relations with the demon world. There are other indications of the same kind, as when the members of such castes are employed to beat a

drum in certain religious ceremonies or sometimes to pull the idol-cars in ritual processions.

These are a few indications of the intricate and rigid social order which, if it is yielding a little in the cities, still holds sway, almost unchallenged, among the people of the villages. If we turn to the popular forms of religious worship, we cannot attempt to enumerate the various gods that receive their share of reverence in various parts of the country. Every district has its own particular gods or godlings and all are linked up together in the hospitable unity of Hinduism. Very many of these local or village deities are really old aboriginal demons that have been slightly tamed and civilized by being Hinduized, and that have been made respectable, perhaps, by having Brahman priests attached to them. To the outskirts of this miscellaneous pantheon cling a mass of very minor deities, many of them nameless, who have no proper temple but are represented by a stone by the wayside daubed with red, or a strangely shaped stump of a tree, or who are viewed as dwelling with no name or form in a sacred grove. One sees these new gods or godlings continually arising on every side. All that is necessary is that there be about the object or the place some " numinous " quality that awakens dread. The spot where a man has met with a violent death—it may be by murder or by a wild beast—becomes a sacred shrine, for his unquiet ghost has to be placated lest it do harm. The place may be associated with a Moslem saint or with a powerful European sahib—" both are evil, but both are strong "—so a shrine is set up and offerings are made of what, it is thought,

may please the dangerous spirit: brandy pegs, in some cases, if it is the spirit of a European that is to be placated. All this belongs to animism rather than to Hinduism, for animism "conceives of man as passing through life, surrounded by a ghostly company of powers, elements, tendencies, mostly impersonal in their character, shapeless phantasms of which no image can be made and no definite idea can be formed. Some of these have departments or spheres of influence of their own: one presides over cholera, another over smallpox, another over cattle disease; some dwell in rocks, others haunt trees, others again are associated with rivers, whirlpools, waterfalls or strange pools hidden in the depths of the hills. All of them require to be diligently propitiated by reason of the ills that proceed from them." [1]

It is scarcely possible to conceive how such worship as this can be "sublimated" into anything worthy. "Fear created the gods," said a rationalist of ancient Rome, and certainly fear has created and maintains these gods and their worship. So much that is gross and evil accompanies such dread that the one thing that can be done with that whole region of Hinduism, when the day of emancipation comes for the masses who are now bound in affliction and iron, will be to shatter it. It is certainly not here that any contribution that Hinduism may make to Christianity will be found. One quality, it is true, that Hinduism has always claimed for itself can be found among the worshippers of this endless diversity of deities: there is no sectarian antagonism among them. Even

[1] C. H. Risley.

the Moslem and the Hindu, until recently, lived together in their village environment in complete amity. It is true that the Moslems in former days, when they bore rule, forcibly converted many of these "kafirs"[1] to their faith, but not till recent years was this incident of the past resented and political rivalry and rancour imported among them from outside. Between the diverse types of Hinduism there has seldom been any hostility. The pantheism which underlies them all is a dissolvent of sharp distinctions and of the consequent antagonisms that produce sectarian jealousies and persecution. So it is that a philosopher, whose influence is widespread in India, "proclaimed the absence of difference between Vishnu and Siva, laying down sectarian neutrality as an inevitable law." This tolerant temper is not, however, universal throughout India; and Brahman religious claims are now being disputed, and Brahman religious privileges claimed for themselves by non-Brahmans in the West and in the South. Especially is this easy tolerance less in evidence in the Madras Presidency, where the authority of pantheistic monism was challenged many centuries ago by more theistic and so less Protean philosophic systems. In a novel published some years ago by an able Hindu writer of the South, a South Indian Brahman who is a great Sanskrit scholar is described as "a fanatical Saivite and a good hater of Vishnu and his devotees." "He would sooner have worshipped the Virgin Mary than Vishnu and he would have preferred a Brahman

[1] That is, infidels.

murderer to a Sudra saint." [1] Indian village life is full of stories of cruel persecution and oppression and intolerance, but the god whose will must be obeyed at all costs is not so much the god who dwells in the temple as the god embodied in the traditional practices of the caste and the community.

" I could," the same South Indian writer makes the hero of his novel say in words that it is difficult to believe represent the actual situation at the present time in more than a few regions of the South—" I could be an adulterer, a rake, a drunkard, a thief of sacred trust property, a cheat, a liar, and a perjurer, with perfect impunity ; the public gave me the longest cable and freedom of action in such affairs ; but if I chose to crop my hair close or to grow a moustache, or wear a hat or remove my holy thread, or refused to shave off the beautiful hair of my young widowed sister or ventured to take my wife out for a drive in an open dog-cart, or made her wear shoes or use an umbrella when she ventured out in the sun, the sage public disowned me altogether or made it too hot for me to remain in their midst." [2] To one unacquainted with the fierce intolerance of Hindu orthodoxy this sounds too strange to be true, and yet there are facts that corroborate it. Other forces of a more selfish and sectional kind are combining with those of social and religious reform to curb the brutal and immoral power of custom and tradition allied with covetousness, but in the country areas and among

[1] *Thillai Govindan*, by A. Madhaviah, pp. 10 *et seq.*

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 133. This book was first published, it would appear, about 1908.

the dull-minded masses the process of emancipation is pitifully slow. Among these blind custom still rules and must be obeyed. They may not crush the recalcitrant to death in an oil-mill, as was done, they say, to Jain and Buddhist heretics a thousand years ago, but they have their own effective methods of making their will obeyed.

It is impossible here even to attempt to convey an idea of the multitude of fears and superstitions that gather about the village and impose their power upon the ignorant. The more intelligent may condemn and despise them, saying with one village poet of four hundred years ago—

A stone with red-lead plastered o'er
Brats and women bow before,

but it does not follow that they do not sometimes join in propitiating these dangerous powers. " The peasant may normally worship the great gods," says a writer in the Imperial Gazetteer of India, " but when trouble comes, in the way of disease, drought or famine, it is from the other gods that he seeks relief. The greater gods are in his mind busied about the more important affairs of the universe and have no time to listen to him when his ox is stolen or when he desires a son to succeed him." It is thus that one must conceive of the dwellers in the wide plains of India, of the peasant who ploughs his fields and drives his cattle to their pasture, and journeys to the market week by week to buy or sell, who loves his children and, growing old too soon, lies down to die and is borne out to the burning. He is content to walk in the old ways,

for he has no strength of mind or frame to seek out new ones.

Is this all, then, that we can say of the religion of those multitudes so much-enduring, who bear upon their bowed shoulders the destiny of this land? Is God to them only this terrible One who haunts their dreams, or else the rigid order that holds them like puppets in its grasp? It would be unjust to India if we left such an impression of the religion of its unlettered masses, as though it were wholly darkened by those shadows and unrelieved by any gleam of higher hope and aspiration. There are other aspects of it that break through that crust of fear and superstition and bear witness that, in spite of hunger and of hardship, the soul of India is still alive. We have referred already to the saints who in every province of the land have sung songs of passionate desire for the coming to them of One who, whether the name they give Him be Rāma or Vithobā or Kanh or Krishna, is the Unknown God in whom they live and move and have their being. These are mostly men and women from among the common people, poor and unlearned, as are the multitudes who still reverence them and who in many cases carry their songs upon their lips and in their hearts. Kabir in the North was a weaver; in the West Namdev was a tailor and Tukaram was a grain-seller; Lal Ded in Kashmir and Avvai in the Tamil regions of the South were both beggar women. Their religion, if we judge it by the cries they utter from the depths of their longing, is clean and simple and sincere, filled with a fervent love as of a lost child for his mother's breast, and seldom shadowed by dread.

" Lo, in the empty world apart," cries one, " I hearken, waiting thy footfall." This is the attitude of them all, and for them the world, apart from Him whom their soul seeketh, is an empty place. But in the case of many of them these sad invocations, it would appear, receive no satisfying answer: they come to the threshold of the home of God but, as Lal Ded bears sorrowful witness, " bolts are upon his door." [1]

It is among these representatives of a sincere devotion that we find the living stream of Hinduism flowing down to us through the centuries. The formal worship with which these saints were associated might be a dead thing. They were well aware often of its futility even when they went to the temple and fulfilled the ritual. Vain, too, they knew, was the teaching of the Vedantist. " The sack," says Tukaram, speaking of such teachers and their doctrine, " is empty, and the measure too." [2] But there were other ways taken by the sincere and the simple-hearted. There were even Moslems among the worshippers of God who chose this *bhakti* road, this road of " loving faith." " I am both the child of Allah and of Ram," said Kabir, and both religions claimed him. " I am neither Hindu nor Mohammedan," said Nanak, founder of the Sikh faith, " but a worshipper of the Formless One." And Tukaram, the Maratha poet-saint, reaching deeper, perhaps, than any other, affirms, " Mercy, forgiveness, peace—there is God's dwelling place."

[1] *Poems by Indian Women*, Margaret Macnicol, p. 57.

[2] *Psalms of Maratha Saints*, p. 89. The measure is a vessel by means of which grain is measured into the sack.

We cannot dismiss as animism or formalism or fear a religion that speaks sometimes at least by voices such as these. Nor can we scornfully describe as heathen men and women who, as many humble and unlettered people have done through many generations and do still, refresh their spirits at these fountains of sincerity. And not the unlettered only. Mr G. K. Gokhale tells somewhere how, when travelling by train with his revered *guru*, Mahadev Govind Ranade, wisest, weightiest of modern Indian leaders in social and religious reform, he was awakened in the grey dawn by his fellow-traveller chanting, as was his daily custom, the prayers and hymns of Tukaram. And so also with another notable theistic teacher and Sanscrit scholar of the last generation, Sir Ramakrishna Bhandarkar. There is neither high caste nor low caste, learned nor ignorant, when all alike are athirst. These saints and sages of an earlier day reach down past such differences to the common springs of the Indian heart, and their witness is that its desire for God is still living and still unappeased.

IV

These are a few of the conflicting facts that we must take into account before we form a judgment on the religious value of the Hinduism of the Indian masses. Can we form any general judgment as to their condition and the direction, upwards and downwards, of their spiritual progress? Or are they immobile, stagnant, stupidly content with the darkness of the dark wood? If we feel ourselves unable to

form any judgment let us consider some estimates by those who have a right to be heard on such a subject. It is the fashion nowadays to extol and flatter the Indian peasant, to talk of his intelligence as being wholly unaffected by his illiteracy, to take for granted his "spirituality" and his deeply rooted religion. Very few in India, at least among foreigners, know the Punjab peasant better, or have more affection for him, than Mr F. L. Brayne, lately Commissioner of the Gurgaon Division and author of *The Remaking of Village India*. In his account, however, of the peasant's life there is little reference to this ideal aspect, but much to what is far more sordid and squalid. "The whole outlook of the villager," he says, "and all his ideals, must be changed. What is the villager thinking about now or when he does think at all? . . . The man may be thinking about how to down some hereditary enemy, or how to get the money for the next appeal in his family lawsuit or for the next marriage or ceremony he must finance. His wife may be thinking about her jewellery." [1] And again the same observer, fulfilling the role of "Socrates in an Indian Village," asks the villagers, "Which is the implement on which you and your ancestors have spent most time and thought?" And the answer is, "The hookah."

At the same time one cannot believe that all the ancient hunger after the unseen reality has died out of the Hindu villager's heart. To redress the balance of Mr Brayne's description, we have the editor of the *Prabuddha Bharata* assuring us that "the cultivator,

[1] *Village Uplift in India*, pp. 132 *et seq.* (title now changed to *The Remaking of Village India*).

tilling his land, is reminded of the other soil, his own life, which is lying untilled, and he sings, 'O mind, thou knowest not the cost of cultivation. The precious soil of thy life is lying fallow; if thou couldst cultivate it, it would yield a golden harvest.'" Mr Harendranath Maitra gives us a translation of a similar song that the ploughman, he says, sings as he guides the furrow:

Till my heart, O Beloved,
As I am tilling this land,
And make me thine,
As I am making this land my own.
Till my heart, O Beloved.

The two accounts—that of Mr Brayne and that of these two Indian writers—are not incompatible with each other. The song may be sung by many a one who carries nothing better in his mind all the time than the lawsuit he has in the courts and the thought of what it will cost him; or who dreams of the reward of the hookah that awaits him when the day's work is done. The crushing burden of poverty and toil creates weariness and shattered health and hopelessness and materialism. It is no easy matter to fight against foes so grim and so pitiless as those that lie in wait so often for the Indian peasant—drought, it may be, or disease. And yet even through the midst of these engrossing cares there breaks at times a flash of insight, or a pang of intolerable yearning, and the ploughman leaves his plough or the grain-seller his shop and takes the road as a seeker. Their religion does not inspire its adherents to fight with circum-

stance, and so the village filth increases and with it the flies that carry poison to the children's eyes; or the well becomes infected and every house in the village, in consequence, contains at least one sufferer from guinea-worm; or the anopheles mosquito multiplies and fever saps their strength. Their religion certainly bakes no bread for them nor does it move them to lift the stumbling-block out of their brother's way or to sweep the filth and refuse out of their own. At its best it is beautiful but ineffectual, moving its devotees to sing the name of the god of their devotion or to journey afar to seek his face, but seldom inspiring them with the spirit of service of others.

This is the radical defect which cries out for amendment if India is to be begotten again to a living hope. Hope and the energy that hope inspires must be brought back to them. It is surely the central purpose of religion to effect such a change in the baffled and despairing spirits of men. So long as their religion does not achieve this it avails them little. Submission and acceptance are virtues if we adopt the Hindu premise that our life is meaningless and unreal. But if our lives are spent in a vale of soul-making and not a valley of illusion, then the message that men need is one that will bring back courage to their hearts and summon them to conflict in that cause of humanity which is the cause of God. Until this change of his whole outlook is created within him, life cannot seem to the Indian peasant to be worth the struggle and the pain of sacrifice. "If there were no spirit of joy in the universe," Mahadev Govind Ranade used to say, quoting an ancient Upanishad, "who could live and

breathe in this world of life?" This joy must be reborn within the Indian peasant's heart.

It is perhaps something like this that Mr W. H. Moreland, who speaks out of much study of economic conditions in India, is suggesting, when he declares that "the central problem [in the case of the peasant] is now psychological and not technical." His aspiration "is rendered ineffective by an inhibition" [1] and that has to be got rid of. He finds "the distinctive mentality of Indian peasants" in "the human environment, the regime to which they have been subjected through the historical period." Add to this the crushing experience of oppression and injustice, the atmosphere of futility and unreality which, as taught by their religion, is the atmosphere of human life, the absence from their outlook of any source of comfort and of strength; and can it seem strange that their condition to-day, in spite of the high qualities of brain and heart that are their heritage, is so unhappy and so desolate? The Report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture, referring to economic improvement, urges that "the matter very largely rests with the people themselves"; [2] and again, speaking of those who have suffered most from all those cruel handicaps, the Report affirms, "We are convinced that the best way to help the depressed classes is to get them to help themselves." [3] These, no doubt, are wise counsels, but how can these people help themselves even economically unless the desire and the hope of better things are born within them?

[1] Agricultural Commission Report, p. 499.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 477. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 510.

Beyond all other measures of improvement, therefore, what India needs to-day is this discovery of a new road of hope and purpose, and no remedy can avail them till this is found.

V

There is little sign, however, that the power of a resurrection to new life and hope and energy can come by the way of the ancient faith and the ancient traditions. Hinduism is still, as it always has been, a religion that is customary and unprogressive, with little vital relationship with the needs of a life that it proclaims to be an illusion, and little inspiration that can move men to effort after higher living. It may well be that, with some measure of economic betterment, the desire may awaken in them to lift up their eyes, to find for themselves new windows into the unseen. As things are, it is true of them that " their souls cleave to the dust." If Mr Gandhi's efforts by means of hand-spinning could add even two annas a day to the villager's earnings and so make life a little easier for him, then it might be that the song of the Charka [1] would become in his case a song of the way to God, and " his selfish bonds be loosed." [2]

It is those who are less oppressed by need, those who are lifted an inch above the dust of the actual, among whom we find the lamp of the spirit still being cared for. The Brahman in the village is usually in a

[1] The spinning wheel.

[2] *Psalms of Maratha Saints*, p. 89.

somewhat better economic position than is the actual cultivator of the fields, and it is he who sometimes at least remembers to " till the field of his heart." But even the Brahman tradition of the cultivation of the inner life is being thrust aside by the pressure of economic needs. At its best it has been a noble tradition, and the claim that in India's past there have been golden days of spiritual blossoming is too well grounded in the facts of her history to be summarily dismissed. The *ashrama* that such a poet as Jñaneshwar describes in the thirteenth century, a place of meditation and of peace, was not wholly a dream. " A kingdom might be left for this," he says, " that one might here in quietness repose." There may have been other households besides that of Namdev, the Maratha tailor, where every member of the household, down to the servant maid, composed songs of worship and adoration. Mr Dinesh Chandra Sen, the learned author of the *History of Bengali Language and Literature,* may see the Bengal villages of the past through a golden halo, and yet there must be some basis of fact for his idealistic picture:

The villages of Bengal half a century ago [he writes] were the abodes of peace, of love, of devotion: the vices of the towns stamped the literature of the courts, degrading it to wicked sensualism; the vain pedantry of scholars introduced into it erudite absurdities of far-fetched imagery; non-Hindu ideas found favour with the citizens directly under the influence of alien civilization. But the quiet Hindu was not in his element in the city. His true home lay in the village; there under the canopy of the blue sky, on which the gay seasons of our tropical clime present in succession

their ever-shifting array of scenes, the Hindu had found leisure for centuries to ponder over the deeper problems of life; undisturbed he devoted himself to interpreting the texts of the Sastras like some Epicurean god sitting over his nectar—careless of mankind. . . . In these villages the poems of Valmiki and Vyasa,[1] of Kalidas and Bhababhuti[2] have, for hundreds of years, cast the spell of their beauty upon the people. In them the lofty principles of Vedanta philosophy have been taught by Brahmans who realized that man was one with the universe—a flute through which might sound the whole music of God's Kingdom, and that his greatest good lay in returning to the consciousness of his oneness with the Supreme Principle.[3]

It is difficult to find a place for these idyllic scenes in the surroundings of such a village as Mr Brayne describes.[4] The one is, it is true, a vision of Bengal as it may have been fifty years ago, the other of the Punjab as seen in the harsh light of to-day. Neither picture, we may be sure, shows the whole scene. Mr Sen would certainly not deny that there were many bleak and desolating experiences in the lot of the Bengali peasant, that even some of the poets of Bengal whose work he describes may have had the experience that the Maratha poet Tukaram tells of, when his wife dying of famine cried out for bread. It is also possible, no doubt, that hidden by the squalid surface of things, through which Mr Brayne does not pierce, there may be even in a Punjab village of to-day deeper and sweeter places where the spirit blossoms. The con-

[1] Sanscrit epic poets. [2] Sanscrit dramatists.
[3] *History of Bengali Language and Literature*, pp. 692 *et seq.*
[4] See p. 62.

tradiction may be reconciled if we note that it is the Brahman whom Mr Sen sees presiding over his beatific vision—"like some Epicurean god sitting over his nectar"—and that that god is, alas, "careless of mankind."

There is much charm in these scenes, even if they can only be seen in distant retrospect. In the Maratha country the writer has evidence of the existence of Brahman village homes where—much more a generation ago than to-day—no Epicurean god was enthroned and where the things of the spirit had and have the central place. In one such home the mother of the household—illiterate, no doubt, in our understanding of that word—would repeat to her children the Vyankatesh Stotra.

It was one of the things [her son says] that my mother used to recite daily, and I could recite it from hearing her before I learned to read. The touching devotion of the poem has left an impression on my mind which is still vivid. The use of *Stotras* and similar compositions is very common in Brahman families of Maharashtra, both among men and women. The amount which the religiously-minded learn by heart and daily chant is incredible. My old uncle chants such hymns practically the whole of his waking time. Of course this is not common, but chanting of religious vernacular composition plays a very important part in the religious discipline and devotional culture of the orthodox people. This is also the case outside Maharashtra and also among non-Brahmans.

There is undoubtedly much that is peculiarly precious and beautiful in this tradition of spiritual culture that has been diligently preserved and handed

onwards in certain circles within Hinduism. It has preserved through many vicissitudes the peculiar attractiveness of the Hindu character—an attractiveness which no one can fail to recognize as still a quality of all classes of Hindus. Those homes in which religious songs were so often chanted, and in which such stories as that of Rama and Sita were so often told, had within them an atmosphere of dignity and reverence which one must desire at all costs to preserve to the Indian people. But, as Mr D. C. Sen has told us in the case of Bengal and others tell us in the case of Maharashtra, these beautiful customs of the Hindu home are being thrust out by the political interests and the economic pressure of to-day. "Offences must come," no doubt, and among them the engrossment with politics that is so common at the present time, and that has carried its noise and strife even into quiet country places.

What Mr Sen calls "the influence of an alien civilization" has invaded widening areas of Indian life, bringing disturbing thoughts and new ambitions, causing strife and creating passion among those who had always been taught that the one crown of life was calm. It is not easy to harmonize the pictures of the modern cinema with the stories of Valmiki and of Vyasa. No doubt the principles of Vedantic philosophy can easily enough find a place for them—and dismiss them—as the fantastic creations of illusion, but it cannot be to the advantage of the Indian village people to have strange and exaggerated pictures from the life of another civilization bewildering their minds and confusing their sense of values. It is impossible

that so many strange sights and sounds should invade their life without their modes of thinking being affected. They have become aware of the attraction of the city and of the gains that the city offers. It has been brought to their doors by the universal motor bus. When the young men go to the cities, and presently return home again, perhaps broken in health, perhaps bringing back with them new vices, the whole tone and aspect of things becomes transformed for the masses of the people even in the remotest hamlets. "Your B.A. son," says Socrates to an Indian villager, "doesn't like your hookah and you don't like his cigarettes. You wear homespun and squat on the ground. You both irritate each other. He wants a daily newspaper and an occasional visit to the theatre or cinema. Your streets are so narrow, your village is so dirty and filthy: he is used to big college buildings and the streets and shops of the town." [1] If these external differences are coming about, inward changes, we may be sure, changes in religious outlook and aspiration, are likewise being produced, and from these changes friction and unhappiness arise.

The times are out of joint in this land, as they always are where two powerful influences are contending for the dominion of men's minds. In the case of the uneducated multitudes of the people of India it cannot be said that these two influences are Hinduism and Christianity. They are rather, on the one hand, the rigid structure of Hindu society and the peculiar Hindu mind, so fine, often, in the individual, so

[1] *Socrates in an Indian Village*, by F. L. Brayne, p. 153.

indifferent at the same time to the individual's responsibility for others; and, on the other, western civilization, so active in transforming conditions, so alive to social duty, so much engrossed with many things, whether pleasure or success or even the relief of human suffering, all of which to the Hindu appear as preoccupation with the unreal world of sensual bondage. Whether this conflict be reckoned as between a lower type of life and a higher, between a selfish and an unselfish aim, or between the worldly and the unworldly outlook, it is a conflict that is certain to produce dislocation of the machinery of civilization and widespread unrest and dissatisfaction.

VI

There are aspects of this conflict that might appear to indicate a strengthening and perhaps a deepening of religious belief, but when most of them are looked at closely it will be seen that they are not rooted in anything worthy to be called religion. There is, for example, the acute sharpening of hostility between Hindu and Moslem, and between Brahman and non-Brahman. When such a conflict is caused by resentment by Moslems of the music played by Hindus as they march in procession past a mosque, this shows in the Moslems an increased sensitiveness to insult against their religion. But it is not difficult to see that this is really due to an inflamed community spirit and gives no token of a deepening of religious faith. Similarly, when a non-Brahman leader denounces the Brahman as "a cow-eating butcher"—

and a foreigner can scarcely fathom the depths of this insult—it is plain that the passion expressed is not a "spiritual" passion. The Self-Respect League, which is one of the organizations of South Indian hostility to Brahman and other domination, aims at bringing about social and even religious reforms, but its central motive is not the purifying or the deepening of the non-Brahman's faith in God but the strengthening of his self-assurance, so that he will "refuse to cower before the white man or kowtow to the Brahman."[1] If this self-respect was due to a sense of the value of the individual as a spiritual being, as a child of God, and was accompanied, as it must be when it is so realized, by a belief in human brotherhood, then it would have a real religious root and its awakening would represent a real advance in religion.

In India, however, at the present time these movements, it is to be feared, indicate rather an increase of hostility and hate among wide sections of the community. It may be maintained that it is better for the sluggish Indian masses to be awake, even if it is anger that has aroused them, than that they should sleep on in their drugged and helpless state. Some may hold that, in the world as it is constituted about us, strife and hate, perhaps even bloodshed, are the price of progress. But the Christian believes otherwise, and it must be his task to show to those in India who have hitherto been oppressors and oppressed, and to those who view each other as the adherents of rival and hostile faiths that, for the progress of which they

[1] *Revolt*, 20th January 1929, p. 98.

have begun to dream, there is another and a more excellent way.

There is nothing that is more urgently demanded in India than that this way of peace should be discovered by her people. Until that way is found her history can hardly be anything better than it has been in the past—a tangle of strife, suspicion and fear, with order and security maintained by the strong arm of a stranger. So long as these animosities remain and dominate their lives, neither political progress nor any real religion will be possible. It is the political aspect of this problem that concerns most of the Indian leaders, and the belief that religion is an inevitable source of conflict has made some of them, as we have seen, turn away altogether from the perilous thing. Looking out upon the masses of the people, one of the most eager of the young patriots of to-day, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, sees them "illiterate and miserable" and "with sad and listless faces and sunken eyes from which hope has all but fled." The remedy, he believes, is not in Christianity but "in the religion of social and economic equality, and if the Hindu religion and Islam are not prepared to admit this principle in its entirety, the Hindu and Moslem cannot look forward to much of a future." [1]

Social and economic factors have certainly entered largely into the creation of this situation, so full of danger for India, and if religion is to be a means to her resurgence it must be a power on the side of social and economic justice. But to leave religion out is to despair of any solution of the problem. A true

[1] In an article in the *Pioneer* newspaper in April 1929.

diagnosis of the disease of communal division from which India is at present suffering must recognize that the reasons for its virulence are primarily political and social—the discovery, to which circumstances have awakened many, of the injustice that has condemned them to poverty and deprived them of opportunity. Religion has been made use of to inflame and to embitter, and a religion that lends itself to such uses is certainly thereby condemned. For political purposes, in many cases, the leaders on one side or another set on fire with this torch the passions of the ignorant multitude and at this price win their support. They are the cannon fodder in this war of religion. There is no class that is more suitable for such exploitation than those who are called the outcastes. An unscrupulous political Hindu or Moslem will say to himself, " Here are sixty millions who are up for sale "—and each will bid against the other to secure them. To show that this is the attitude of at least some of the baser sort it is sufficient to quote a passage from a Moslem vernacular newspaper of no importance, but, no doubt, representing a section of opinion :

When the political agitation began with vigour, one party began to spread hatred and contempt of the Musalmans, and it united all the Hindus on this one point, " if you have any rival, it is the Musalmans ; grapple with them ; there are numerous ways of doing so ; one is to prepare the untouchable and depressed classes in opposition to the Musalmans ; the way to do so is to give them a position of equality in the Hindu society." In other words seven crores

of Indian population should be converted into powerful and fiery soldiers of the Hindus.[1]

This critic goes the length of accusing "Gandhiji, this professed friend of the Musalmans," of having this as his real aim in seeking to uplift the untouchables. That is, of course, a wholly baseless libel, but it serves to illustrate the blind and bitter spirit that political rivalry has created.

How the economic situation is similarly used to inflame passion and create religious warfare can be seen in the industrial conflicts that are causing such destruction both of human lives and of business prosperity in the city of Bombay. There what is a purely economic struggle between the workers in the cotton mills and their employers has been transformed, whether by sinister design or by unfortunate accident, into fierce, inter-religious warfare. The leaders of the Workers' Unions are mainly Hindus, and many of the strike-breakers and "blacklegs" appear to be Moslems, in some cases imported by the employers from North India. In the riots and the bloodshed that have taken place one religion has been ranged against the other, and the wounds that the struggle has inflicted have been rendered far more difficult to heal because they have been poisoned by religious hate.

In these ways religion has been made procuress to hell instead of being, as it should be, the supreme reconciler, while at the same time the implacable

[1] Quoted from the *Roznama-i-Khilafat*, in the *Times of India*, 18th May 1929.

enemy of injustice. It is possible, indeed, that even out of this welter of evil passion good may issue, that politics and hunger may sting the masses from their stertorous slumber. The unscrupulous leaders —whether Hindus who proclaim the admission of outcastes to full Hindu privileges or Moslems who propagate Islam, in both cases alike for purely selfish and secular ends—may find themselves presently faced by an awakened multitude who will no longer act as pawns in their political game. Then, we may hope, the masses will turn from these false friends to those who have truly loved and served them—whether they be Mr Gandhi and his sincere fellow-workers or the Christian missionaries, Indian and foreign. Meantime, however, religion seems to be submerged beneath scheming interests and selfish passions. Mr Bertrand Russell, looking at China in the throes of a similar experience to that which is afflicting India, has declared bitterly that "all politics are inspired by a grinning devil." What we see to-day in India is that this "grinning devil" is devouring the lean kine (fit emblem of Hinduism) of India's "spirituality." One more testimony may be adduced to show how disastrously this is proving to be the result of the introduction of politics among the Indian peasantry. Mr Sacchidanandam Pillai, an able and highly educated South Indian gentleman, deeply concerned for his people's highest interests, asks, "Can we have political advance without moral corruption? The villagers have become morally corrupted since the Reforms were introduced: lying, cheating, deceiving abound whereas formerly a villager's word could be trusted. The

struggle in the future is to be between God and Mammon, between Materialism and Religion."

What, then, can we say of the religion of the Indian masses as we look back upon our review? There seems no pattern in the tangled web, and no single judgment that is true can be pronounced upon it. What can we say of it except that the religion that lies for the most part inert in these multitudes, but that burns sometimes with gloomy and Tartarean fires, sometimes with the clear flame of sincere desire for God, is just a compound made up, as in the case of other ethnic faiths, of the black fears and passionate longings that surge within the universal human heart? But that that heart is deeper than the universal heart or that it has been ploughed deeper by guided circumstance, the record of India's history gives us some reason to believe. There are ripples on the surface even of these dark waters that show that the angel of God's purpose is troubling them. But who can read their significance or foretell with any assurance what may come from them? Observers to-day who know the common people with the closest intimacy differ, as well they may, in the reading of their minds. We may quote two summary appraisements of the spirit of the Indian masses, chosen quite at random. One, speaking from long experience, writes of "the very heavy currents of ignorance, superstition and evil custom in which the inhabitants have bathed and soaked for generations."[1] Another, who has an intimate knowledge of the Santali peasant, tells us

[1] Rev. C. E. Tyndale Biscoe of Srinagar, Kashmir, in his School Report for 1917.

what it is that " makes the pulse of the average Indian beat faster " : " Tell him that this year he will get an extra seer of rice for the rupee, and that will help him to believe in Providence." [1] These testimonies bear witness to two unquestionable facts : that the Indian masses are soaked in superstition, and that they are often cruelly hungry for bread or rice to fill their empty stomachs. To complete the picture of their poverty and of their wealth we have to remember that there are among them also, as their story shows us, some whose hearts have tasted of the heavenly gift and who have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost. From that threefold experience of evil and of good will be born the India that is one day to be.

[1] Dr J. M. Macphail, in *Conference*, March 1929.

CHAPTER III

THE WOMEN—AROUSED

I

THE educated classes are groping in bewilderment; of the unlettered masses the best we can say is that they seem to be stirring in their sleep. As we survey with some fainting of heart the dark wood through which India has to find what one of her nameless sages in the past has described as "the path to freedom, path that never wearied man," one remaining direction of observation opens to us from which a gleam of hope catches the eye. There has been no darker aspect of Indian civilization, none that has bound India in a deadlier bondage, than the treatment that that "civilization," in at least its more recent centuries, has prescribed for women. If at the very point where darkness has been deepest light is being kindled, then we need not after all despair. It was indeed no new discovery to become aware that even more fatal to its claims to honour and respect than its treatment of its outcastes is the place that Indian civilization has assigned to the women of India, the cruelty and contempt that have been their lot. Those who have led the reform movement ever since Ram Mohun Roy demanded, more than a hundred years ago, that *sati* be abolished, have known that there could be no

rebirth of Hindu self-respect and honour so long as the women of the land, high and low, were held in ignorance, were reckoned unworthy to be trusted with any liberty, were tortured in childhood with the agonies of childbirth, and were often condemned as children to the bleak life of the widow. "Female education," the remarriage of widows, the raising of the age of marriage—these have formed the main themes upon which for nearly a century all the great leaders in reform have declaimed. A slow, a pitifully slow, process of erosion has within that time produced a certain very limited effect. Even after so long a time and after so much earnest effort it has to be said to-day of the women of India that more than ninety-eight per cent of them are still illiterate. More than thirty years ago Mr Mano Mohan Ghose propounded, what was to the enlightened few like himself a commonplace, that it was impossible for any race in the world to rise in civilization if one-half of its population—and especially, he might have added, if that half were the women—was "kept in subjection and ignorance." So, in spite of education and awakening nationalism and the angry clamours of so many, India has remained prostrate, her claim to be civilized unvindicated, because this taint is not yet removed.

But while that is so, and the fact might well produce despair of India's future, a change that kindles new hope for the land has come about within the last few years. At the very point, as we have said, where darkness has been deepest, light is breaking forth. The educated women themselves, that one per cent of one hundred and fifty-three millions, are beginning

to realize the shame of their people, have awakened and set their own hands with purpose to the task of their country's liberation. No fact in India's history within the last two generations is so significant and so full of hope as is the irruption of this resolute company upon the stage of India's public life.

For, in spite of, or perhaps we should rather say because of, the tragic discipline to which they have been so long subjected, there are no qualities more manifest in the women of the land as they emerge from the shadows that have concealed them, than those of resolution and tenacity and courage. The sacrifices that have been imposed upon them by the male oppressor have been so accepted by them that instead of crushing them they have become a means of courage and of strength. There is no story more heroic in their past than that which tells how the women of Chittor, when the enemy was overwhelming them, gave themselves to the flames and chose death along with their husbands rather than dishonour. "The queen-mother," says Tod in his *Rajasthan*, "led the procession of willing victims to their doom, and thirteen thousand females were thus swept at once from the record of life." In such a tale as that, or in the picture of the faithful Sita of their ancient legends, we see the Indian spirit as truly expressing itself as in Kali with her necklace of skulls or the devadasis and dancing girls of the temples. Around the women of India gathers the very best as well as the very worst that this land can show. In them we see the highest that India is capable of in loyalty and

devotion, and in them also we see to what a depth of shame India has fallen.

Mrs Besant, in an address delivered by her as its President to the Indian National Congress a good many years ago, enumerated some examples of noble women in the past history of the country :

The position of women [she said] in the ancient Aryan civilization was a very noble one. The great majority married, becoming, as Manu said, the Light of the Home ; some took up the ascetic life, remained unmarried, and sought the knowledge of Brahma. The story of the Rani Damayanti, to whom her husband's ministers came, when they were troubled by the Raja's gambling, that of Gandhari, in the Council of Kings and Warrior Chiefs, remonstrating with her headstrong son ; in later days of Padmavati of Chitoor, of Mirabai of Marwar, the sweet poetess, of Tarabai of Thodam the warrior, of Chand Bibi, the defender of Ahmednagar, of Ahalya Bai of Indore, the great ruler—all these and countless others are well known.

Only in the last two or three generations have Indian women slipped away from their place at their husbands' side, and left them unhelped in their public life. But even now they wield great influence over husband and son. Culture has never forsaken them, but the English education of their husbands and sons, with the neglect of Sanskrit and the vernacular, have made a barrier between the culture of the husband and that of the wife, and have shut the woman out from her old sympathy with the larger life of men. While the interests of the husband have widened, those of the wife have narrowed.

That is, no doubt, an exaggerated statement. Not for many centuries have any but exceptional women

exercised a great influence, but that there have been such women in India, and that their influence has been profound and often ennobling, gives evidence of what they might be capable of if freed from the bonds that superstition and custom and caste law have laid upon them. In all their history they have been deeply religious. In Vedic times the wife took part by the side of her husband in the performance of the household sacrifices. Later, the women were excluded from such ritual privileges, and until the Gitā reasserted their right, they were forbidden to study the Vedas or to enter upon the path of final release. To be born a woman was a punishment for wrongdoing, as the Gitā itself declares, defining women and Sudras as those born in sin.[1] All the same they continued, we may be sure, to be assiduous in their religious observances, and, no doubt, it was they, then even as now, who for the most part kept the fasts and filled the temple courts with worshippers. Many of the Buddhist devotees were women, and the *Psalms of the Sisters* are among the finest expressions of the Buddhist spirit. We are told of one wise woman from among these to whom her husband, himself a saint, came for help on spiritual problems that were beyond his own wisdom. She solved them, we are told, with a keenness "as of one who severs a lotus with a sword." From all the sorrows and disabilities which even in the early days of Hinduism its women had to endure—many of them the same as we find still—not a few escaped to the opportunity of a life larger and more worthy, though still austere and

[1] *Bhagavadgitā*, IX. 32.

stern, that Buddhism offered them. Of women saints and devotees in later centuries of Hindu history it is not necessary to speak. They have never been lacking, and many of them could claim that what Mirabai, the poet and princess of Mewar, says of her surrender of herself to Krishna was true no less of them :

I gave in full, weighed to the utmost grain,
My love, my life, myself, my soul, my all.

The passion of devotion, the spirit of service, has been a living power in the hearts of Indian women through all the centuries until to-day, and has, as it would seem, by its discipline fashioned and prepared the women of this land for the task to which they are summoned.

II

The shadows have indeed darkened around them in the later centuries. The coming into India of Moslem conquerors bringing with them the creed and the customs of Islam assuredly brought no lightening to their lot. It cannot be claimed that the new faith gave woman a higher place than Hinduism had already assigned to her. Long before the Moslem invasions, indeed, the custom of child marriage had been established. In the law-books of the early centuries of the Christian era "some crack-brained Rishis," as the modern reformer, Dr Mahendra Lal Sircar, describes them, had declared it to be sin for a girl to remain unmarried in her father's house after the age of puberty. The prohibition of the remarriage

of widows renders all the more desolate the Hindu woman's lot, and when to this was added the Moslem custom of seclusion within the zenana, the sum of her sorrows and her subjection was complete. These cruelties were inflicted upon her in the name of religion, and for that reason were accepted with submission. We cannot accordingly understand either the nobility of the Indian woman or the tragedy of her fate unless we realize something of the character of the religion which through so many centuries has governed her life and has constrained her to the silent acceptance of her woes.

For her religion gathers not only about some divine figure—Krishna, it may be, or another—but about two human ones that are scarcely less than divine for her, her husband and her son. It is mainly her relation to these that creates both the nobility and the tragedy of her life. Around them centre the hopes and fears that gather for all human creatures about death and the future life. The rites upon which the welfare of the family depends must be performed by a son, and unless they are duly carried out the father will fall into hell and the whole family be destroyed.[1] The life crowned with success is that of one who " has seen his son's son." The wife thus becomes purely an instrument to these ends. One of the debts that the Brahman has to pay is, accordingly, that of marriage and the continuance of the family by means of a son. Women, one may say, have no place and no purpose in Hindu society save as the mothers of sons. From this tremendous emphasis

[1] See *Bhagavadgitā*, I. 42, 43.

upon marriage and upon sons many of the heaviest sorrows and disabilities of a Hindu woman's lot proceed. To this is due the fact that the age of marriage has been thrust further and further back into the infancy of the child. The Hindu ideal of a woman is what is called " pativrati strī "—that is, " the wife vowed to her lord." She must be loyal to him whether he be alive or dead. On her husband's death, says Dr Farquhar, " her closest relationship is still with her husband, who is in the other world. So that, to the Hindu, she no longer quite belongs to ordinary society, but is in a way outside it like the Sannyasi." [1] A further deduction from this view of woman's place was that she should, if she was fully faithful and devoted, perform *sati*, that is, burn herself upon her husband's funeral pyre. The word means " holy," for that is what she, by the act, shows herself to be. Still another consequence from this view of the necessity for a son and from the resultant custom of child marriage and enforced widowhood is that when men remarry, as they usually do, however old they may be they marry very young girls.

Who can measure all the sorrow and tragedy that are represented by these facts? In Western and Southern India a woman is greeted with this formula of blessing: " Mayst thou have eight sons and may thy husband survive thee." Girls are not often welcomed when they are born in a Hindu home. That does not mean that little girls are not loved as they are in other homes. Fortunately the Hindu heart prevails often enough over the doctrines that

[1] *Crown of Hinduism*, p. 97.

the Hindu holds, and it is as affectionate a heart as any in the world. But in a home where there is no son a girl too often comes to realize that she is no blessing but a curse. She is so not only because of her negative fault in not being a boy, but also because of the positive one that she must at all costs be married, and the cost is often very heavy. Thus, says Pandita Ramabai, " the wretched father of many girls is truly an object of pity. Religion enjoins that every girl must be given in marriage ; the neglect of this duty means for the father unpardonable sin, public ridicule and caste excommunication." It thus comes about that only the most courageous reformers have the strength of mind to refuse to sacrifice their daughters to any comer, however unworthy, rather than let them remain unmarried. Hence also the frequent marriage of young girls to old men. Recent protests on the part of the awakening youth of the land against these cruel immolations are among the tokens of the slow dawning of a new and better day.

Various social abuses result from this tangled web of ill. One is that husbands have often to be bought by means of large dowries, and the better in position and education they are the larger the dowry will have to be. This is one reason—no doubt, a minor one—for the eagerness of some young men (or of their parents) to obtain a university degree. There are Hindu schools where teachers are regularly bribed to promote boys to higher classes, however incompetent they may be, because the higher the school standard they have reached the higher will be their price in the marriage market. A local and exceptional consequence

of these ideas was that a group of Brahmans in Bengal who were considered to be of a very high class lived by marrying girls—scores of them, it might be—and so giving them at a price the honour of such an alliance, even though the husband did not live with his wives or support them. But even in Bengal " the profession of pluralist husband is no longer what it once was," [1] and polygamy, though permitted among the Hindus, is not largely practised. Fairly frequently, however, where no son is born a second wife is taken, sometimes at the request of the first one.

Pandita Ramabai, herself a daughter in an enlightened Brahman home, has described the life of the little girl in such surroundings when she is not viewed as one who is unwanted, but, as is mostly the case, is loved. " Childhood," she writes, " is the heyday of a Hindu woman's life. Free to go in and out as she pleases, never bothered by caste or other social restrictions, never worried by lesson-learning, sewing, mending or knitting, loved, petted and spoiled by parents, brothers and sisters, uncles and aunts, she is little different from a young colt whose days are spent in complete liberty. Then, lo, all at once the ban of marriage is pronounced and the yoke put on her neck for ever ! " She belongs now to her husband. She has no quality of her own apart from him. " Whatever be the qualities of the man with whom a woman is united according to the law such qualities even she assumes, like a river united with the ocean." [2] She enters her husband's family and becomes one of an

[1] Mrs Urquhart, *Women of Bengal.*
[2] Laws of Manu, IX. 22.

establishment which may include three or even four generations, all under one roof. Her immediate ruler is her mother-in-law—a name that is more a name of dread in India than in any other land. Under her the little girl has often to endure a hard and loveless bondage and longs sorrowfully for her mother's house, that abode of bliss.

"Though destitute of virtue," says Manu, "yet a husband must be constantly worshipped as a god by a faithful wife." [1] That is not merely a metaphor: it is a literal description of what he is to be to her. He is her *guru*, that is, her spiritual preceptor, and the *guru* soon came in Hindu practice to be recognized as an even more powerful deity than Vishnu himself. The wife is forbidden to eat with her husband, but, having cooked his food for him and served him, she may eat what he leaves over. To eat what is left over by a god is always reckoned a great privilege. In the words of Sister Nivedita, her husband is "a window through which she contemplates the divine." It is often, unfortunately, a very dim window indeed. After his death she is to be still more completely absorbed in contemplation of him. Mrs Urquhart, in her *Women of Bengal*, describes a widow as showing her the shrine where her husband's picture and the imprint of his feet and other intimate belongings were collected, and saying, "This is all my life, all my devotion, all my worship." "To these she made her daily offering of flowers and holy water." [2]

Wifely devotion has thus in India the character of religious passion, and is often very beautiful. It is a

[1] Laws of Manu, V. 154.

[2] *Women of Bengal*, p. 111.

quality that blesses her that gives, though whether it blesses him that takes is more doubtful. This subjection of the woman results on the other hand too often in the creation in her of the slave vices, of deceit and ignorance, and childishness and weakness of character. "A woman," says Manu, "must never be independent." [1]

"The sum and substance of a woman's religion," says Pandita Ramabai,[2] "may be given in a few words: To look upon her husband as a god, to hope for salvation only through him, to be obedient to him in all things, never to covet independence, never to do anything but that which is approved by law and custom. Everything combines to make her ignorant and superstitious." If these facts be true of the women of higher castes, of whom Pandita Ramabai is speaking, how much worse must be the condition of the women of the lower classes and of those who live in the villages of the land! There is no aspect of her religion that haunts her as does that of fear, fear on many accounts, but especially on behalf of those whose lives matter far more to her than her own, her husband and her son. And shadowy terrors lurk especially in the soul of the peasant. "Even Christians of the second and third generation," writes Miss A. B. Van Doren, "girls who have spent years in a Christian school, have not wholly escaped from the all-enveloping terrors that infest the night—that

[1] Laws of Manu, V. 148.

[2] The quotations from Pandita Ramabai in this chapter are from her book, *The High Caste Hindu Woman*, published soon after she became a Christian.

people the *neem* tree, the well, and the cemetery, with unearthly dread." [1] "In her fear," writes another writer, "she resembles some lonely, frightened child, shut up in a dark deserted house. Outside are horrible powers and shapes pressing with leering faces against the window-panes and striving to get in." [2]

The climax of the fears and sorrows of the Indian woman's life comes with her husband's death. It is difficult to speak in language of moderation of what a leading Indian reformer describes as the widow's "hard lot, her lifelong misery and degradation, her endless fasts and privations." She may wear no ornaments, but only a coarse and dingy *sari*; her head should be shaven (but conformity to this cruel custom is becoming increasingly rare); she is the drudge in her late husband's house; she must fast often and fulfil all the religious duties of the home; she is an object of ill-omen, to be kept out of the way on every joyous occasion. No wonder she, having so little to lose in life, is tempted sometimes to commit suicide or to accept a life of shame and dishonour. Of one widow, who later became the happy wife of a distinguished reform leader, we are told that three times she resolved on suicide, "but the fear of another incarnation into womanhood restrained her." She came to a Widows' Home and was happy, "praying," we are told, "night and day that when born again it might be among the birds and not as a woman." [3]

But while these things are true of women in India,

[1] *The Christian Task in India*, p. 57.
[2] Mrs Sinclair Stevenson, *The Rites of the Twice-born*, p. 435 *f.*
[3] *Pandita Ramabai*, by N. Macnicol, p. 81.

we must not suppose that they are always true. The Hindu heart is not a hard heart : it is Hindu religious custom and tradition that have cast so dark a shadow across the Indian woman's life. Not seldom, even in the case of the widow, her own force of character, as well as the reverence of her children, give her, in spite of custom and tradition, a great place and influence in the home of her late husband. The fact that this is so and that these bludgeonings of the centuries have not wholly quelled the Indian woman's indomitable spirit awakens all the greater expectation as to what she may achieve for her people now that her bonds are breaking.

III

When we turn now to attempt to give a just account of the condition of women in India at the present time, we find the difficulties that confront us to be formidable. In connection with a subject such as this there is necessarily much that is hidden in obscurity and much also about which in a land so vast as India it is particularly dangerous to generalize. There is further the added complication that, the public atmosphere being what it is in India, charges that involve the women of the land are resented with a special fierceness. The honour of a nation is recognized to be bound up with the character and the reputation of the nation's womanhood. How sensitive India is on this subject was shown when the book, *Mother India*, appeared. The sweeping and often ill-grounded accusations contained in that book, and especially those involving the relations of men and women,

aroused violent and universal anger. This feeling was as strong apparently among the women as among the men, and the reason for this unanimity was not that these women were not aware of grievous evils in those relationships and did not desire their removal, but that they considered that the good name and credit of the whole of India had been defamed. Their pride was touched by accusations that rightly or wrongly they believed to be those of an enemy, and reformer and orthodox, oppressed woman and oppressor man, were fused in a single outraged nation. This is obviously no time for crude and hasty judgments based on imperfect knowledge and imperfect sympathy. The whole land is acutely sensitive to any disparagement, and especially so when the ideals of the home and of the family, which Hinduism has always claimed to cherish, appear to be assailed.

No one, indeed, who has any intimate acquaintance with the loftier aspects of that religion and with the domestic virtues that it so often creates, nor anyone who knows the charm of Hindu character, would bring against this people such sweeping charges. And especially no one who has looked even from far off at the Indian woman could be so foolish as to criticize or to disparage, as from a superior elevation, her gracious qualities. The Hindu wife embodies an ideal of self-sacrifice, patience and devotion that not India alone but all the world can reverence. From Sita among the semi-divine figures of mythology to Mrs Ramabai Ranade in our own day, India has presented many examples throughout her history of this ideal. Its influence has always given and gives still a wistful

beauty to Hindu womanhood. No one would desire that this should ever be abandoned. In the case of such a lady as Saroj Nalini Dutt, this Bengali lady's modern culture and wide experience of the world did not deprive her of her inherited charm of disposition. "Leave aside the men," she would say; "so far as women are concerned, character is their brightest jewel. . . . We belong to the land of Sita and Savitri and we should be examples to our sisters elsewhere." Such an example this Indian wife and mother truly was.

But Mrs Saroj Nalini Dutt was at the same time keenly conscious of the sorrows of her sisters and eager to assuage them. There was no contradiction, of course, between a passionate pride in her land and its inheritance and an earnest desire to remove from it cruel customs and abuses that kept it still in bondage. When Mrs Sarojini Naidu says to an American audience, as she said lately, that "Indian women have a freedom that American women have not got," she is speaking with an exaggeration that is due to an inflamed and resentful nationalism. It is not so that the truest patriots speak—those who are labouring to win for Indian women this freedom that has been so largely denied them in the past but that they are so fully worthy to possess.

One of the most earnest of the new women leaders in reform, who is not afraid to face the grim wrongs that cry out to be righted, is Dr (Mrs) Muthulakshmi Reddi whom the Madras Legislative Council has chosen as its Deputy-President. In a recent number of *Young India* Mr Gandhi, under the title "Liberate

the Women," prints a message from her of the primary need in every movement of reform of bringing enlightenment to women.

Don't you think [she asks] that the very individuality of women is being recklessly crushed under the burden of customs and conventions?

Does not early marriage strike at the root of all development—physical, intellectual, and even spiritual?

Do not the pangs of child-wives and child-mothers, and the unmitigated sorrows of our widows and deserted wives demand an immediate remedy?

Is the Hindu society justified in tolerating or conniving at a custom that in the name of religion condemns innocent young girls to a life of degradation and vice?

Don't you think that as a result of social tyranny Indian women with a few exceptions have lost the spirit of strength and courage, the power of independent thinking and initiative, which actuated the women of ancient India, such as Maitreyi, Gargi, and Savitri, and even to-day actuate a large number of our own women belonging to the liberal creeds like the Brahmo Samaj, Arya Samaj, Theosophy, which is only Hinduism freed of all its meaningless customs, rites and rituals?

Dr Muthulakshmi goes on to call upon the National Congress " to find an immediate remedy for all these social evils, the source of our national weakness and the cause of our present degeneration, or at least educate the masses to liberate their women from the servile bondage to which they are subject." For it is only as so liberated that they can " as wives and mothers rightly and truly fulfil the sacred task of

training, guiding and forming the daily habits and character of the future administrators of India." [1]

A pronouncement such as that by an Indian woman is a portent, a startling omen in the Indian sky of coming change. There is a quiet resolution and a courageous frankness in this lady's words that encourage us to hope that they will not end in words. This South Indian lady and Mrs Saroj Nalini Dutt, founder of the Mahila Samitis in Bengal, and Mrs Ramabai Ranade, whose Seva Sadan is doing so much for the women of the Maratha country, give token that there is, as one of them has said, "at least a stir of awakening among the women of this country." These all represent, in the best sense of the word, the new nationalism in the land. They are no slanderers of their people: they know the evils that afflict them and they know that there can be no way of regeneration for the nation until its women are set free. "No amount of political agitation," says Mrs Saroj Nalini Dutt, "will be of any use so long as one side of us remains palsied. One half of India is stricken with paralysis under the affliction of such ills as child marriage and the seclusion of women. . . . Women of this land, awake! Otherwise freedom for this country will be a dream that will never come true." [2]

That is the disease—as these courageous physicians diagnose it—by which India is still so grievously afflicted. She is still in bondage, a bondage of her own making. Is it through her women that the

[1] *Young India*, 23rd May 1929.

[2] *A Woman of India*, being the life of Saroj Nalini, by G. S. Dutt, pp. 90, 96.

liberation is at last to come? In another letter to Mr Gandhi, that other and somewhat different representative of India's women, Mrs Sarojini Naidu, expresses in exalted and characteristic language the universal desire. "Hearken to the entreaty," she writes, "of a Wandering Singer, O little Wizard. Find the formula, work the magic and help to ensure the realization of the wondrous dream of a liberated India."[1] The wizard who is to work this magic is, we believe, India's own womanhood. "Men," says Mr Gandhi, "have to serve adequate penance for their ill-use of women," but the women themselves must achieve the main task of liberation. They have begun to take the task in hand, and much in the coming years will depend upon the strength of character, the courage and persistence which they display in carrying their task to its accomplishment. Dr Muthulakshmi sees the ancient strength of her country's women still present in those of them who profess "the liberal creeds" and who have cast off the oppressive yoke of Hindu custom and tradition. This faith is confirmed when we remember other women of to-day in whom the spirit of the great women of the past still lives. We need only cite two further examples in addition to the outstanding non-Christian women from South India, Bengal and Western India who have already been referred to. These two are chosen from among the Christian womanhood of India, the one representing the highest and the other the humblest of those within the Church. Pandita Ramabai was a Brahman convert to Christianity, and the service to

[1] *Young India*, 30th May 1929.

which she gave her life was rendered to all classes of her sisters from the lowest village victims of famine to the sorrowful widows of her own former caste. To them all she gave herself with a devotion that set to itself no limits and with a courage and tenacity of purpose that would permit no obstacle to thwart her. By her life and her example—Christian though she was and so withdrawn somewhat from the main stream of the national movement—she kindled a flame which has set on fire other hearts and has gone on steadily growing. She was no doubt exceptional in her ability and in the strength of her natural fibre, but we see in her, illuminated by Christian faith, those qualities—" the spirit of strength and courage, the power of independent thinking and initiative "—which Dr Muthulakshmi rightly claims as qualities of the great Indian women of the past. The other witness that we can call to the possibilities that are rediscovering themselves in India's women is a nameless village woman of whom Miss Amy Carmichael has told us and whom she calls " Mimosa." The same qualities of indomitable purpose, of complete loyalty to an ideal once discerned, of unflinching sacrifice for the good of others, are seen in this unlettered South Indian woman as in her Western Indian sister. In the depth and inwardness of their religion, and in the nobility of their ideals of the home and of its purity and affection, these were both of them of the true Hindu lineage, and what they were we believe that India's women, as they now cast off their yoke, will reveal themselves to the world to be.

The women leaders of to-day are aware of the

magnitude of the task that is before them, they are moved by an eager hope for their nation's future and they have set their hands with purpose to the task of achieving its deliverance. What, we ask, have they done?

IV

How are the women of to-day addressing themselves to the formidable enterprise of their own—and thereby their nation's—emancipation? The yoke of their bondage has been bound upon their necks with too many chains to make it a simple and an easy matter to free them from it. What is it that they must first attack—early marriage, or ignorance, or old and evil religious tradition? It is significant, as Dr Muthulakshmi has pointed out, that it is the women "belonging to the liberal creeds" who are taking the boldest part in the task of liberation. They have realized that it is Hinduism—at least Hinduism in the debased forms that it has in its later history assumed—that is the enemy. What then is the core of evil in this religion against which the assault has to be led? It has frequently been charged in recent years against India that what more than anything else has brought their women to their present plight is the "sex-obsession" of her people. It is alleged that her religion has been chiefly to blame for this, and that it has helped to bring the people of India to a more degraded position in this respect than the people of any other land. No one has any right to frame such a libel against the character of a whole nation: nor do we believe that it is well grounded. We cannot

forget that observers in France during the Great War found the Indian soldiers less open to this accusation than the soldiers of the West. Comparisons between peoples in these matters are in any case odious and vain. What we know is that a complex of evil circumstances—poverty and ignorance and oppression—have combined with the degraded instincts of our common human nature to bring India, and especially her women, to their present servitude. The offence is rank : what has to be considered is how it may be amended.

Two main paths are being pursued towards that end, the one that of the removal of ignorance by education, the other that of the support of reform by means of legislation. In both of these spheres we find to-day the leadership of women.

During the year 1926-7, out of a total female population of one hundred and twenty millions, 1·7 millions were undergoing instruction of various kinds in schools and colleges. The Census of 1921 classifies two million seven hundred thousand as "literate" out of one hundred and fifty-three millions for all India. What dim gleam of enlightenment that word represents in most cases we can very imperfectly surmise. It is true that there may be much intelligence and enlightenment without this "literacy," and it is often maintained that there is much intelligence and alertness among both men and women in India who wholly lack education in the modern sense of the word. We are aware, indeed, that our scales for the measurement of enlightenment are very inadequate, and that, while the "illiterate" may often have minds alive and active, the "literate" may

be lying all the time in darkness. Still, these statistics show us at least how little effort has as yet been made to let in the light and how much demands to be done. When women themselves awoke to realize this need and its claim upon them, one of the first to show them the way was Mrs Ramabai Ranade, the widow of the notable social reform leader, Mr Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade. Carrying onward, like a loyal Hindu wife, the lessons learned from him, she took her share along with Mr G. K. Devadhar of the Servants of India Society, in the establishment in Poona in 1909 of the Seva Sadan. This institution with its branches ministers to over a thousand women and girls, training them not only in the ordinary subjects of education but also as teachers, nurses, midwives, and helping them to become medical workers. The change in old ideas that this work is slowly bringing about may be indicated by the fact that Brahman widows are now on the staff of general hospitals, nursing not only women but men.

In the east of India a similar movement was inaugurated in 1913 by another great-hearted woman, Mrs Saroj Nalini Dutt. This took the form of the establishment of what are called Mahila Samitis throughout the villages of Bengal. Within four years the number of these Samitis had increased to two hundred and forty. These Samitis are organizations of women that give themselves to the promotion of knowledge of such subjects as domestic science, hygiene, and " the science of maternity child welfare," and it is evident that this aim is being achieved and that new life and hope are coming through their means

to many companies of desolate and despairing village women.

But not only are individual women leaders of courage and initiative arising in various provinces of the land and by their faith and courage kindling new faith in others. There are as well organized movements through which the whole land is being stirred to quickened activity for the enlightenment of its women. The most significant of these is the All-India Women's Conference on Educational Reform which, though only three years old, has already achieved a considerable result in securing co-operation among an able and eager company of Indian women and in creating throughout the whole land a sense of the urgency of the problem of the education of girls. These Conferences have met at Poona, at Delhi and Patna, and have had as their Presidents such notable women as the Begum-Mother of Bhopal and the Maharani of Baroda. The central Conferences have behind them, and supporting their efforts, constituent conferences of women throughout all the provinces. The significance of these gatherings can scarcely be exaggerated. That the women of Rajputana or of Hyderabad (Deccan) should come together and should have, and declare, ideas and demands on the subject of education is a fact that is at once new and strange and at the same time full of promise. Some of their demands indicate how old ideals are being, not indeed abandoned, but infused with a new spirit. Thus they make it plain that " moral training, based on spiritual ideals, should be compulsory for all schools and colleges," and at the same time they realize that " the

spirit of social service should be inculcated." These Conferences have behind them women of clear and resolute purpose, and their resolutions are not limited to words. They are fully aware that the Legislatures must be won to their opinion if their wishes are to find realization, and they are using the vote that women now have, and the right to representation on these Legislative bodies, to effect the reforms that are so urgently required. There is no sign of awakening in India that is so prophetic of good as this.

But alongside of education must be legislation : not only must the darkness be illuminated, but positive evils must be forbidden and wrongs righted. For the raising of the age of marriage and the age of consent the co-operation of those men who hold the power in the Councils and the Legislative Assembly is necessary, and the business of persuading them has been slow. There is the opposition of the orthodox to overcome, and there is also the hesitation of a foreign government afraid to legislate in advance of public opinion and uncertain as to how public opinion should be measured. These obstacles cannot, however, long resist a resolute demand for the removal of evils so cruel, so unjust, so blighting to all progress. The women must have their will and so, one by one, the cruel chains that so long have bound and crushed them are being broken. Thus in October 1929 what is called the "Sarda Act" was passed, making fourteen the minimum age for the marriage of girls and eighteen that for boys.

These are only a few indications of the channels along which this reawakened energy is flowing in the minds and hearts of India's educated women. The

numbers of those who can be so classed is steadily increasing. In 1927 over two thousand of them were studying in the colleges, and it is about the influence that they and such as they will exert in days to come that the hope of the future gathers. "The men," said Mrs Saroj Nalini Dutt, "have made a hopeless mess of everything. It is the women alone that can set things right now."[1] They will do so, it may be hoped, in such a fashion as to preserve the noblest elements in the old ideals while filling them with a richer content. We have seen how disquieting are the indications in India of a growing secularism. It may be that in days to come the women will be able to show that there is no true alliance between enlightenment and such a spirit. Mrs Saroj Nalini Dutt was a Brahmo,[2] but she "had retained to the full," her husband tells us, "the intense spirituality and faith in God that is part of an Indian woman's being." He goes on to tell how when, as in the case of so many of the educated young men of India, a purely material education had "struck at the root of his religious belief," "the deep and strong spiritual current" of his wife's nature "turned the course of his agnosticism and led him back to faith."[3] The spirit of devotion that springs up in such unselfish beauty in the Hindu mother's heart when she looks upon her son, that moved Mrs Saroj Nalini Dutt to say to her husband, as many another Hindu wife might say, "I only want

[1] *A Woman of India*, p. 99.

[2] That is, a member of the reforming Theistic Society, the Brahmo Samaj.

[3] *A Woman of India*, p. 69.

your love while I live on earth and your feet to lay my head upon when I pass away"—that spirit may be greatly widened and enriched: it will not, we trust, be lost. For there is nothing that conquers the despair that arises in us when we contemplate the shadows that yet darken India's future as does the fact that this spirit of loyalty and courage is still alive within her women.

PART TWO

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN INDIA TO-DAY

CHAPTER IV

THE CHURCH EDUCATED AND ARTICULATE

I

More than a hundred years have now passed since the reformed Churches of the West, awakening from narrow and selfish dreams to a sense of the Church's duty, sent forth their first messengers to India. But when William Carey landed in India in 1793 he was not the first to set his hand to this task. In the sixteenth century St Francis Xavier had burned his heart out in a brief apostolate, leaving behind him a company scattered along the west coast, calling themselves Christian, but with little understanding of what the name should signify. As he himself says, "They could not distinguish between their right hand and their left." He was, as one of his fellow-workers describes him, "a whirlwind of love," and such love, we may be sure, never wholly fails. There is still a Church in India that looks back with deep reverence to him. It has much within it that is superstitious and very many among its people who know little but the name of Christ, yet it retains something of the

spirit of St Francis and of Robert de Nobili and of Him whom these apostles preached. It is, however, beyond the scope of this survey.

There is still another branch in India of the divided Church of Christ, a Church whose planting in the land reaches back into the shadows of the early Christian centuries. Legend claims that its founder was St Thomas, and recent discoveries have brought at least some confirmation to the story. It seems that there was a king Gudnaphar or Gondopharnes who ruled both in Parthia and in the Punjab in A.D. 45, and a theory of some scholars is that St Thomas served at first under him (the story says, as a carpenter), and, later, went south and founded what is still called the Church of St Thomas in Malabar. Whether that or any other elucidation of the old legend of St Thomas's apostolate in South India is to be accepted, no one can decide with any confidence. All that seems certain is that in the fourth century there was a Christian Church in that province of India and that it looked across the Arabian Sea to Parthia as its home. This ancient Church has been shattered into many fragments by the vicissitudes of the centuries, but it lives on and claims in its five branches—Chaldean, Jacobite, Nestorian, Reformed, and Romo-Syrian—a membership of 791,000. It is to-day a living Church and is awaking anew in some of its branches to a realization of the duty that was laid upon its first members, it may be by the Apostle St Thomas himself, to bear witness in India to the living Christ as their Lord and their God.

Thus it comes about that again and again through

the centuries and at various centres of the land, east and west and south, the sacred fire of the love of God in Christ has been kindled and has spread to every province of the land. The flame has at least smouldered on, unextinguished, if we cannot say that anywhere it has blazed forth into a conflagration. There are now 4,745,000 Christians of all kinds in India and Burma ; but among these are included not only the Syrian and Roman Churches, but the foreign residents in India who call themselves Christian. It is not, however, with any of these that we are mainly concerned in our study, but with the fruits of the missionary efforts of what may be described as the non-Roman Churches of the West. These later-born Churches in India are the products of an evangelical movement which seeks definitely to win India for the dominion of Christ, and it is with them and the prospects of their high aim being realized that we are here mainly concerned. What may be accomplished by the other Churches for the Kingdom of God in days to come we cannot estimate ; it is only of the newer " missionary " Churches, and of one or two branches of the Syrian Church that have experienced in recent years a new birth of Christian purpose, that we can form a considered judgment. Upon these we build our chief hopes for the future. If these hopes are in any measure realized we trust that, as the fire of faith burns higher and clearer in these Churches, it may kindle anew in the older Churches the flame of an experience that once they had. The Church about which our hopes are centred numbers within its membership about 2,730,000 souls. This is

the company—small enough among the three hundred and thirty millions of this land—whom we believe to be specially called to bear witness to the living Christ before their fellow-countrymen. They, we believe, have been chosen and ordained to be the ministers to India of that love of God which India has dreamed of so often in her long past, but which they can now assure her is no dream of illusion but the ultimate truth of the universe.

The scope of this study is limited accordingly to that body of Christians of whose spiritual capacity we may form a conjecture from actual acquaintance with their condition and from materials that are available and that reveal their inward life. But even within the limits of this narrower circle there are differences in the measure of the possession of Christ and of the insight into His Spirit that one group or another may possess. It would not, of course, be true to say that He is the possession of the educated Christian people and not of the simple, unlettered peasants who have also cast in their lot with Him. Our Lord is in no wise, as we know, such a respecter of persons as that might suggest. "He that feareth God and worketh righteousness"—that, and not education or the lack of it, is the criterion of those acceptable to Him. However, for the purpose of our investigation we must classify those who call themselves Christian, and, accordingly, we shall consider first those who are educated and articulate Christians, those who by their intelligence and their position are able to claim leadership and to exercise influence in the Church.

II

During the hundred years of the existence of this articulate section of the Christian Church, a change, clearly marked and unmistakable, has come over its character. Whether it is regarded as due to development or to degeneration, all must be agreed that it has come about, and that it means that the educated Christian leaders of to-day face in a different direction from those of a generation ago. They have not ceased to look to Christ; He transcends time and circumstance for all those, East or West, who owe their souls to Him. But they look no longer to the West as the home of their spirits or to western teachers as their sole, or even as their chief, *gurus* and guides. They have rediscovered India as the motherland not only of their bodies but also of their souls; and the Church, which for so long was a rootless, foreign thing within the land, has begun, at least in these its members, to send out some roots into the Indian soil. What has happened within the Church is what we have seen to have happened outside it, first in the general body of the educated people and then increasingly throughout the whole population: the spirit of nationalism has come to birth.

This spirit, as we have seen already, may be a spirit of evil or of good according as nationalism is conceived and interpreted. It may produce a narrow and bitter temper, which leads to hate of all "foreign devils"; it may create a righteous anger and resentment against what appears to be injustice done or condoned by the foreign teachers; or it may open

the Christian's eyes to seek for, and to see, what is beautiful and true in his national heritage and to grapple to himself his kinsfolk of his own land. All these things this spirit of nationalism has effected within the Christian Church, even as also among the general body of the people, demonstrating that, much as the new brotherhood with the Christians of the West has meant for the Indian Church, it has not, as seemed likely for a time to happen, severed the ties of brotherhood with their own people. This change is of such great significance because it has brought with it in the case of a considerable section of the Church—and will, we trust, bring more and more as time passes—a quickening of their intellectual life, a new desire to interpret for themselves their religious faith, and a new realization of their fellowship with their own people and their responsibility for them.

The significance of this change, in certain respects at least, can best be indicated if we contrast the new spirit and attitude with that in the older generation which it displaced and against which it rebelled. The sincerity of the earlier converts who belonged to the higher castes was proved beyond all question by what they abandoned and by what they suffered for their convictions. All the old ties, for a Hindu so many and so strong, were finally severed when one whom the Hindu family and Hindu domestic laws and traditions had hitherto enveloped and upheld, took his lonely way among the foreign Christians. It was a tremendous step to take, and only great fortitude and faith could make it possible. Inevitably one who put forth from the old haven would look for what he

had lost among those who welcomed him to their company, and who sought to make up to him, as far as they could, for his sacrifice of affection. Their country became his : their mould of thought in large measure refashioned his thinking. Thus it came about that for the most part the Christians of an earlier day became strangers in their own land,

Aloof from her mutation and unrest,
Alien to her achievements and desire.

No doubt the mould of their natures remained Indian, and their motherland held them all the time by the roots of their being, but in abandoning Hinduism they were reckoned to have abandoned India, and they were accounted—and indeed often reckoned themselves—as belonging to the company of the foreigners. It was probably not only religious fanaticism that caused the mutineers in 1857 to seek out and murder the Indian professors in the old Delhi College who had changed their faith. They were counted for that reason as belonging to the enemy, and so such converts continued to be reckoned even when the Mutiny passions had long passed away.

One of the first and ablest of the Christian converts in Western India was a Brahman, Narayan Sheshadri. He was baptized and spent all his life of notable evangelism in the Scottish mission and in close fellowship with the missionaries of the Scottish Church. To a friend in Scotland towards the close of his life he said of himself, no doubt with satisfaction : " I am just a black Scotchman." Bertrand Russell maintains that the American missionaries in China are evangelists

of Americanism, and, no doubt, that has been in the past at least to some extent true of missionaries in India also. They set the stamp of their own land and its traditions upon the men and women who were drawn so closely to them. Unconsciously, English, Scots, American, German, gave out of their own spiritual heritage what they could to make up for that of which their Indian friends had been stripped. It was natural and inevitable in the circumstances of the time that Indian Christians should wrap themselves, for their comfort in a chilly world, in these borrowed garments. They were ready to accept the authority of their rulers and the patronage of the foreign missionary with a gratitude that felt no resentment. Up to thirty years ago it was possible for a lecturer representing Western Christendom to take as his main theme the evidence for the truth of Christianity that could be deduced from the dominance in the world of the Anglo-Saxon race: but even then the effect of such an argument had begun to fail. That spirit of self-sufficiency has not even yet been wholly exorcised. Even now there is a mission school in India where, we are told, the English principal appoints two minutes in the daily time-table when the boys—even though they are not Christians—are expected silently to give thanks that they were born within the British Empire. And even now there are some Indian Christians who are "plus royaliste que le roi," more imperialist than their imperial rulers.

In a similar fashion the thinking of these pioneers was moulded to the shape of the ideas of their mentors.

It is difficult even for the Christian nationalist of to-day to think his own thoughts in the region of theology. The highly organized theological systems that western religious reflection has elaborated impose themselves on the student, and it is only a very resolute mind that can resist their dominance. An able Indian Christian of the present time, himself one who has drunk deeply of the spirit of nationalism and is steeped in the teachings of the Hindu *bhakti* saints, frankly admits that he cannot relate their teachings with his study of Christian doctrine. When he turns to that study, his mind, disciplined in the theology of the schools, refuses to flow except along the accepted channels. If that be so even when the spirit of Indian nationalism is awakened, how much more must this have been so in an earlier day when the new knowledge from the West had about it so much glamour and when Indian thought as yet had none. The Christian experience through which the early converts passed was a living thing that came direct to them from God : it was outside of time and place. But this experience was mediated to them through the form of " low Church " or " high Church " teaching, of Calvinism or of Methodism, and translated itself into the formulæ and the phrases of an evangelical theology. Their religion transcended these limits, and their lives, in whatever garb they might dress their experience, were still ineradicably dyed with the colour of Indian devotion ; but they used the language of their theological teachers and were often more dogmatic and convinced even than they. Pandita Ramabai was one of the last, as she was the

most remarkable, of this older line of saints. A mystic in her experience, closely akin to that super-nationalist company, and at the same time a true daughter in her spirit of the great Indian saints for whom God is sole and supreme and the world dust, she nevertheless expressed herself in the phrases of Methodist evangelism and conformed her faith to the mould of its theology.

One consequence that almost necessarily followed from this theological indebtedness was that the systems that had been fashioned by the thinkers of their own land and which had a history no less venerable than those that Christian thought had fashioned, had now no authority over their minds and were investigated by them only that they might be refuted. The study of comparative religion was beginning to win a place as a recognized branch of science, and translations of the sacred books of the East had begun to appear under the editorship of Professor Max Müller. But the new era that these publications inaugurated had not as yet affected the attitude of missionaries to the non-Christian faiths and still less that of the converts whose minds they shaped. The Hinduism with which these converts had broken was a hostile body of ideas against which they had to do battle, and which they studied only in order that their own rejection might be confirmed and that others might likewise have its falsehood made plain to them. It is easier for a later generation which has not felt upon its neck the cruel yoke of Hindu law and Hindu practice, and which has not experienced the struggle and the anguish through which those

pioneers had to pass, to bring to this study an impartial mind. For the earlier Christians there were no fine shades of discrimination: there were only black and white, the darkness in which they had groped and stumbled, and the great light that had shone upon them in Christ Jesus.

So in that earlier time such scholars and thinkers as Nehemiah Goreh in Western India, and Professor K. M. Banerjea in Bengal, found in the ancient Scriptures of their people, when they turned back to study them with Christian eyes, only elaborated error and untruth. It is significant of the change of attitude to those studies that has come about in recent years that, when Nehemiah Goreh published his examination of Hindu philosophy, he gave it the title *A Rational Refutation of Hinduism*, but that when a new edition of the book was recently issued it was thought advisable to alter its designation to something less confident and challenging. Pandita Ramabai gives us, however, perhaps the most startling illustration of this point of view, which to our easy and accommodating minds appears so mistaken. She stood alone in her early life, before she had made the acquaintance of the Christian faith, as a woman who was an accomplished Sanskrit scholar, whose learning won the admiration alike of the pandits of Calcutta and of Max Müller himself. But when the discovery of Christ came to her all that was put from her almost with abhorrence. She burned what she had adored and adored what she had burned. The Sanskrit language itself, as the gateway into an evil country, was barred out for long from the study of the Christian

children who were under her guidance. To her, Hindu saint as she still was in the finest fibres of her nature, Hinduism as a system of doctrine and of practice was without qualification evil.

These examples may suffice to indicate the attitude of the earlier generation of the Indian Church as they faced towards the West from which illumination had come to them, too fully conscious of the greatness of the supreme gift to consider and appraise any lesser ones from any other source. This limitation in their outlook and in their sympathies must not be charged against them as a fault. That the Christian religion might be truly established in India it was necessary—if we may venture to dogmatize in a sphere that is beyond our ken—that first it be rooted deep in the individual hearts of those whose experience forms its foundation and who, by their testimony and example, assure the faith of later comers. That being accomplished, it may be possible for the Church of a later time, whose members are now more freely and naturally adjusted to this home of their spirits, to see to it that the Church is striking its roots into the soil of the land and spreading its branches to its air and sunshine. Narayan Sheshadri and Kali Charan Banerjea and Pandita Ramabai were certainly not less truly Indian than their children of to-day ; rather they were often more so, for they bore in their bodies the wounds that Hinduism had inflicted and they knew the charm and the affection of the Hindu home from which they had come or which they had had with bitter sorrow to surrender. They are often charged with being denationalized, but it can never

be charged against these heroic souls that they failed in love to their fellow-countrymen. They loved them and laboured for them all the more because they viewed them not only, nor perhaps primarily, as their kin after the flesh but as fellow-members of the human race for whom, as for themselves, Christ had died. If the later generation feels the ties of national kinship more intensely, they have to beware lest these other, dearer ties are thereby loosed. The foreign guides and teachers of these early converts may have sometimes exercised, as they ought not, lordship over their children's faith, but they, too, may well be forgiven if the cause of their error was that they travailed so sorely over them that Christ might be born in them. The missionaries of to-day have to learn, and are learning, to be partners and fellow-workers with their Christian friends. They, on their part, have to beware lest their affection for them has too little in it of travail and of pain.

III

The change from that earlier orientation of the Christian mind to what for the most part it is among the educated Christians of to-day, cannot, of course, be dated at one specific hour. It came later within the Church than without and it showed itself as a gradual process. Among the outstanding Christians of the earlier time was one at least in whom this new birth of nationalist patriotism had early made its appearance. This was Kali Charan Banerjea, a Bengali Christian lawyer, whose deep

Christian faith in nowise diminished the fervour of his zeal for his country's political advance. In the earliest years of the National Congress he was a prominent figure, and it is said that, had he not been a Christian, he would have been its President. Dissatisfied with the foreign character of the Church, he established and helped to carry on for a while a short-lived Christo Samaj. But in this, and in his political activities, Kali Charan Banerjea was twenty years before his time. The nationalist ardour that he felt was only beginning to surge up among even the non-Christian leaders of that time, and in the Christian Church it had scarcely begun to stir.

If any date can be fixed as that when the new spirit awoke and uttered its challenge, that date should be an evening in June 1910, when, in Edinburgh, V. S. Azariah, then a worker of the Indian Missionary Society in Tinnevelly, now Bishop of Dornakal, addressed the representatives of the missions of the world in behalf of India in words that no one who heard them can ever forget: they have not ceased, we trust, to echo in the memories of Indian missionaries. The closing sentences of his address were as follows: "You have given your goods to feed the poor. You have given your bodies to be burned. We also ask for *love*. Give us FRIENDS." This was the challenge of the Indian Christian Church to the foreign missionaries who had come to their land. It might be compared in the Reformation of the Church in its missionary relationships to the nailing of Luther's *theses* to the door of Wittenberg Church. It was impossible to ignore or to forget this charge

against those who were in danger, by their frigid control, of dominating and dwarfing the Indian Christian Church. The foreign missionaries were forgetting the rights of a Church that was now emerging from pupilage; they, like so many parents, had the power over their children that the possession of the purse gave them. This rebellion seemed to them to show ingratitude. They retorted crudely and impatiently that he who pays the piper calls the tune. There was a period of unhappiness and friction which perhaps is not even yet wholly at an end. But the very statement of the case openly to the world, and the appeal for a deeper love that accompanied it, were sufficient to make evident the rightness of the claim. A Church, if it bears that name at all, must stand by its own faith and not another's. The Church in India was seeking what was its inalienable possession in Christ Jesus. It must stand upon its own feet and walk in its own way with Him only as its Master.

But the coming to manhood of the Christian Church is a process, not a single act. What had awakened it to its right and its duty from the easy condition of foreign tutelage was, as we have said, the gadfly of nationalism which had already stung to self-consciousness so many others. But this awakening, whether in the wider sphere of the nation or inside the Christian Church, could only come about with the utmost slowness. The educated leaders, in a Church in which the general body of the people lags so far in the rear, are necessarily far in advance of their comrades. With them only, and with the

changes in their outlook of which this challenge of the Bishop of Dornakal was the most significant symptom, we are dealing now. The transformation of the Church from dependence and tutelage to self-respect and the direction, under God, of her own destiny had begun.

What, then, we must now ask, were the symptoms of this transformation, and what were its effects? Within the Church, as in the nation, this change was accelerated and its symptoms at the same time aggravated by the calamity of the Great War. It is not necessary to state in any detail how this was so. One or two, however, of the consequences that the War brought with it in its reaction upon the Christian Church in this land may be enumerated. One obvious consequence from it, that had a more serious influence perhaps on thoughtful people outside the Church than on those within it, was due to the fact that it revealed the weakness, indeed in large measure the failure, of the Christianity of the West. The nobility and heroism of Christian men and women, which it likewise revealed, were not set in so vivid a light for the world at large as were its horrors. The consequence was that not only was the Christian Church abased, but the British nation was at the same time humiliated, and its prestige and moral authority weakened. Not only so, but it placed those who had always appeared to themselves as India's benefactors in the position of being in India's debt.

These facts changed the spirit of nationalism into something much more aggressive than it had hitherto been. This was so within the Church no less than

outside. It was not only that nationalism revealed itself among Indian Christians as the discovery of themselves as members of the renascent nation and as claimants to a share alongside of their Hindu brethren in India's heritage of spiritual culture. There was also often a certain alienation from the foreign missionary just because he belonged to the race of the foreign rulers, and sometimes resentment because of alleged aloofness, or unjust treatment, or unwillingness to give them within the Church or the mission what seemed to them their just rights. They drew away from the foreigner upon whom they had hitherto so largely depended and drew towards their fellow-countrymen, and especially the Hindus. But altogether apart from such resentment and ill-will, the majority of the educated Christians now ranged themselves instinctively on the side of their country. A few of them joined the political camp of the extremists, but the great majority found themselves in closest sympathy with what is called the Liberal party, those who, while as eager as any to claim their country's rights and to resent injustice, yet seek to achieve their aims by restrained and constitutional methods. The fact of main significance that emerges from all this complex of feelings that nationalism aroused, and that the events of the War and of the War's sequelæ accentuated, is that a sense of unity had been created between diverse elements of the nation and, unmistakably, between the educated Christian and the educated and enlightened Hindu. They now marched side by side along the path of India's destiny.

Of course there are not a few within the Indian Church, just as outside of it, who, for one reason or another, range themselves elsewhere than among the political nationalists. Their instincts and their training may incline them to uphold at all costs the established order; or they may find that course to their interest in a time of economic difficulty, and may accept the more sheltered road. At the same time it can hardly be disputed that the best mind of the educated Christian community is definitely on the side of the national demands and aspirations. A small group of outstanding Christians who occupy this position may be able, because of their character and ability, to exercise an influence in public life that will be far greater than their numbers appear to warrant. We have an illustration of what is possible in the respect that was given by members of all parties to the views of Dr S. K. Datta, the Indian Christian representative in the Legislative Assembly. He was known to be able, impartial, wholly outside of political intrigues, and at the same time to be a resolute nationalist.

We are not here concerned with the political sympathies of the Christian Church; party politics are wholly outside our scope, and we have no doubt that Christians, educated and uneducated, will in India, as in other countries, interpret variously their duty as citizens and attach themselves accordingly to various parties. We are deeply concerned, however, to see that the character of the Christian should win respect in the public life of the country and should be honoured among all classes of the people. That, we believe,

has been true hitherto of those who have been called to represent the Christian people in the legislatures of the country. When it is a question of extending the education of the people, of raising the age of marriage and the age of " consent " for girls, of controlling the liquor traffic throughout the country or the export of opium from India to other lands, the Christian members of the legislature, though so few, may carry much weight by their courage and their conviction, and show the way to others whose consciences have not yet been aroused. They may also exercise a valuable moderating influence when religious and party passions become uncontrolled. This is proving already to be the case, and the educated Christian may well be fired with a noble ambition to serve in such ways the national cause. As High Court judges and in other judicial offices, Christians in all the provinces of India have won respect and rendered valuable service to their country. Some have been called by government to serve on important commissions. Many have held high educational appointments. In the education of girls, especially, Christian women both under government and in connection with Christian missions have had opportunities, far beyond what their numbers would warrant, of shaping the character of the women of the new generation.

IV

But we must turn now to what is more specifically our subject, and consider how this new spirit and temper that has asserted itself within the Christian

Church is affecting the religious life of those who have come under its influence. What changes in their relationships within the Church and their attitude to Christian unity have the new sense of their solidarity with their Indian comrades and the rapprochement with Hindu thought brought about? Perhaps the most illuminating way in which to answer this question will be to give some concrete examples of the effect of the new situation and the new spirit on three outstanding Christians of different types and in different environments. They were all three for a considerable period of their lives contemporaries, and all three were converts from Hinduism to the Christian faith and sincere and earnest Christian men.

The first example that we shall select is that of one who was carried by his sympathy with his countrymen and with Hindu religious philosophy much farther than was the case with the other two. This is Upadhyaya Brahmabandhav, a Bengali and a convert to Christianity, who shortly after his baptism entered the Roman Church. As the title of Upadhyaya indicates, he was a distinguished Sanskrit scholar and a student of Hindu philosophy, and in the earlier years of his Christian life he proved himself a zealous and able champion of Christianity against the assaults of Hinduism and Theosophy. Later, when the national spirit awoke around and within him, he turned to politics and edited a Bengali newspaper which adopted a somewhat advanced political attitude and, in consequence, attracted to itself the attention of the government. The Church of Rome

in India has not usually been favourable to anything approaching political extremism in its members, and the Upadhyaya's political views, as well as a change that had simultaneously come about in his attitude to Hinduism, brought upon him the censure of the Church. While he was under sentence of suspension from the Sacraments he died in 1907. His Christian faith, his Roman Catholic biographer, Father Väth, is convinced, remained to the end unshaken, but, as he says, " his passionate love of his country blinded his clear intelligence."

This love [his biographer goes on, commenting from the Roman Catholic standpoint on the dangerous attitude towards Hinduism that this Christian scholar and patriot had assumed] enables us to understand his exaggerated estimate of the religion of his country. One can understand how the basic Hindu conception of the truth of all religions, which perhaps from the days of his youth was still slumbering deep down in his subconsciousness, regained possession of him. For him Christianity had the first place among all religions. But Hinduism, purified by its development and interpreted symbolically in its worship, seemed to him to have value as a stepping-stone to Christianity. Might not one, therefore, promote Hinduism in order gradually to lead it higher ?

The Upadhyaya appears to have carried to an extreme instincts and tendencies in reference to Hinduism which have been more or less consciously at work in other Christians as well. The new passion in the cause of India, and the pride and admiration that it stirs in the hearts of Christians no less than others as they look back at the long road of India's

cultural history, awakens in some measure in those who are less deeply steeped in Hindu thought than Upadhyaya Brahmabandhav a conflict between what sometimes appear to be hostile loyalties. There is no reason why love to Christ should be irreconcilable with a love to India that is pure and lofty and intense, but in the circumstances of the land it sometimes seems as if there were. Perhaps the Upadhyaya, had he lived longer, would have found the way of reconciliation. The nationalism of the Christian Indian, even as of the Christian foreigner, has to be made more fully Christian if such conflicts are to be resolved. The road that this Bengali Christian chose is one that must be traversed, but it is well that we should realize the perils of the adventure.

We see the same problem faced and overcome by a man of a very different type in the case of Narayan Vaman Tilak. He was a Maratha, a race as far apart as possible, in their practical, unemotional qualities, from the Bengali, but this divergence was to some extent neutralized by the fact that Tilak was a poet. He belonged to the same class of Brahmans as Pandita Ramabai, spent his life as a Christian within a radius of less than fifty miles from the centre where she toiled with such devotion for the poor and the abandoned, and died three years before her. Yet alike as they were in these outward circumstances, and alike also in the depth and sincerity of their love to Christ, they were wholly unlike in their attitude to the Hindu religion which they had both renounced. What Pandita Ramabai's attitude was has already been indicated: for her to become a Christian and

to escape from Hinduism was to escape from "darkness and the shadow of death, where light is as darkness." Tilak, on the other hand, was one of the "once born": he journeyed, as he himself has said, "by the road of Tukaram" [1] to the feet of Christ. His nationalism was one of the influences that drew him to the new religion: he believed that his people's rebirth to hope and strength lay in their submission to this Tamer of the hearts of men.

We must not deduce from this that Tilak's was a shallow, easy nature with no depths of passion in it. He was a poet, as we have said, and the storms of feeling that surged and beat within him are discovered for us in the songs that he left as a legacy to the Maratha Christian Church. His nationalism could express itself with hot indignation against those foreigners—among whom were sometimes included Christian missionaries—who did injustice to his people.

But it is as one who brought together and fused the Christian message and the great Hindu tradition of *bhakti* or loving devotion, as expressed in the Psalms of the Maratha poet-saints, that Narayan Vaman Tilak has a message for us that is of peculiar preciousness. He not only came to Christ by the bridge of Tukaram, but he brought across that bridge and laid at his Master's feet the wealth of devotional ardour that the line of *bhakti* singers had garnered through the centuries. There was no need of a reconciler or an interpreter: all that needed to be done was to take their longings and crown them

[1] One of the poet-saints of the Maratha people, a contemporary of Milton.

by the discovery of Christ. Tilak falls naturally into his place as the latest born of that eager company—a Christian bhakti-saint and bhakti-poet. As they sought fellowship with the unknown God, he likewise seeks it, and, travelling farther along the same road of desire by which their feet had journeyed, he finds it in Christ Jesus. Tukaram had cried :

Here tower the hills of passion and of lust ;
Far off the Infinite.
No road I find, and all impassable
Fronts me the hostile height.

But to Tilak the road of union has been opened and he has been borne over and beyond " the hostile height." So he prays along with them their prayer, and he listens, as they could not, to its answer. The desire and the experience of fellowship are an ever-repeated theme that move him to sing and sing again :

As the moon and its rays are one—so, that I be one with Thee,
That is my cry to Thee, O God, that is this beggar's plea.

He carried the beggar's bowl, as they did, but God's alms is cast into it and his heart is lifted, as theirs could not be, in gratitude and thanksgiving. Tukaram or Namdev is the moon lotus dreaming all night long of the far uplifted moon : but for Tilak the moon has come down by the stairway of its beams and dwells within his heart. This is the reconciliation of Christianity and Hinduism that this poet has accomplished, and so has claimed for himself and for the Christian Church a rich portion in the Hindu heritage.

Others besides Tilak in the Christian Church had sought, as the Christian ever desires to do, to express the joy of their discovery in songs and hymns. Pandita Ramabai had done so, and another Indian Christian lady, Ellen Goreh, daughter of Nehemiah Goreh. The difference between their songs and his lies not only in the fact that he had a far greater poetic gift than they, but that he sang as an Indian poet while they echoed the foreigner. The simple intensity of Pandita Ramabai's gratitude for the forgiveness that had come to her by the cross of Christ makes her cry in her own tongue, " Have you been to Jesus for the cleansing blood ? " Ellen Goreh has given us the popular English hymn, " In the secret of His presence how my soul delights to hide." How different was the music that Tilak waked in the hearts of the Christians whom he taught to sing ! He brought to the Maratha Church a renaissance not only of religion but of poetry and literature. Their very language took a new birth, and even the outcaste Christians, newly up from slavery, had some glimpse, as they sang, of the possessions that were theirs to explore and to appropriate not only in Christ Jesus but also in their own Indian past.

A third illustration of the discovery of India, and of their place in it as its children, that has come to so many Indian Christians in recent years, may be found in the life of B. C. Sircar, a Bengali like Upadhyaya Brahmabandhav, but of a different type. He was a worker in connection with the Y.M.C.A., and obtained his training and experience along the lines of active service that the Y.M.C.A. mostly represents. But in

his later years the new spirit of sympathy with his people's past entered into him and changed him. He found in inward self-culture along the lines that the Indian *yogi* has taught from ancient days, rather than in the surface activities that engage so many, the occupation that was now congenial to his spirit. He seems to have felt strongly that Christian propaganda, as often carried on, and the " proselytism " that many practised, were out of harmony both with the spirit of Christ and the spirit of India. Even the suspicion of self-interest in the work of the evangelist, as though what he sought was to win a convert and to add to his Church, hindered, as it appeared to him, the real progress of the Christian faith and turned the Indian mind away from it. Accordingly in his later years he found for himself a Christian shrine at Puri, the great centre of pilgrimage in Bengal. Here the pilgrims could come, and, if so minded, could offer their gifts at the altar of Christ as they offered them at other altars, where they worshipped the unknown God. There he himself offered his daily worship, and invited them to listen as he told them of Christ and His revelation of the love of the God whom they ignorantly worshipped. Whether he drew any to Christ or not we cannot tell, but he was content to be assured that by this means he might open the way for the Spirit of God to work. He dreamed his own dreams and saw—for he had much of the mystic's insight—his own visions, which he believed God showed him, and thus he rendered his quiet service until God took him.

V

These three examples must suffice to indicate some of the new currents that nationalism has caused to flow within the mind of the Indian Church. It has aroused storms as well of a more turbulent character. The foreign government, the foreigner, and even the foreign missionary were blamed, sometimes hastily, sometimes with good reason. The self-respect of the people—including those classes of Christians whom we are considering—was in insurrection, and whoever slandered India was an enemy. The educated Indian Christian fully shared in the storm of indignation, for example, that was aroused by the appearance of the book *Mother India* with its sensational and exaggerated exposure of Indian evils. Ill-judged utterances, aroused by the irritations of the time, were common. The coming to India of the kind of missionary who has not the culture to appreciate the best in this people's heritage, nor the intelligence to sympathize with their nationalist ambitions, was sometimes resented with hot words: "What has India done to deserve to have these let loose upon her?" One educated Indian Christian of high character and sincerity and a fine Christian spirit was even betrayed in his haste into saying in public, "I would like to take a scourge of small cords and drive all missionaries out of India." They felt similarly that their country was humiliated by appeals made by missionaries in Great Britain and America on the ground of the ignorance of the Indian people and by descriptions of them as "benighted heathen."

We find a very minor but significant indication of the new spirit in the resumption by some who had adopted European dress of their national costume, or of some portion of it, such as the head-dress; or, again, in the exchange of Indian for foreign names. It was frequently the custom in earlier days, when a man became a Christian, to give him a "Christian" name in place of his old "heathen" one. It might be a frankly European one and he who had been Rama Govind might become John Wilson; or it might be one from the Bible—Shadrach, or Job, or Esther. Now, however, on every side, men and women to whom these names have become obnoxious as foreign, or at least non-Indian, are substituting for them names that will not conceal their nationality but will show that they are Indians and are proud of it. Sometimes the ancestral names that have been abandoned are resumed, and though these may, in some instances, suggest that the owner of the name is a worshipper of Krishna, that does not deter them.

These are only straws, but they indicate in which direction the current is flowing, and how swiftly. But what appears here upon the surface may indicate movements, such as the stories of the two Bengalis and the Maratha given above reveal to us, which are stirring deep down within the minds of many. How to relate their Christian beliefs to such truths as Hindu thought has bequeathed to them; what new ways, not borrowed from the alien West but truly Indian, can be discovered by which they can bear their Christian testimony—these are some of the

larger problems that are now rising up before the Christian Church, and that, sooner or later, it must solve. It cannot be said that the former task has yet been seriously undertaken, but it has been envisaged by a few; and one or two have begun to set their hands to it. One of the difficulties that lies in the way of any reconciliation at their centres between the two religions comes from the fact that Hinduism is for the most part a pantheistic monism associated with a doctrine of the unreality of the world, and there can be no fellowship between Christ and Pan. At the same time, as Narayan Vaman Tilak has demonstrated, there are other experiences of the Hindu soul with which the Christian faith has close affinities, and of these the Christian Church can make abundant use. Mr K. T. Paul at the meeting of the National Christian Council of India at Madras, in December 1928, drew the attention of his fellow-Christians to the call from the Jerusalem Council to Christians to approach non-Christians in this spirit, to "discern that all the good of which men have conceived is fulfilled and secured in Christ." To this task the Indian Church has begun to address herself. Its perils and its rewards are great, but the Indian Church must have courage to face perils, and resolution to win for herself the rewards.

The other effect of the spirit that a closer sympathy with India has produced is evident also in the lives of at least two of the three Christians whom we have discussed. Whether with good reason or not, a certain aversion has been aroused against some of the methods of Christian propaganda that have

been introduced into India from the West, especially some of its more aggressive aspects, and something that is designated as proselytism as over against evangelism. B. C. Sircar betook himself to his Christian shrine at Puri and there, in prayer and meditation, he waited for the seekers to come and join their prayers with his and share his experience. N. V. Tilak in the closing years of his life donned the *sannyasi's* robe,[1] and invited Christians and non-Christians to unite with him in a common quest for God. This aversion that appears in these two men, and in others also, as also the consequences that may follow from it in the Indian Church, present us with a second problem of the greatest importance.

If the Indian Church, or any Christian Church, is to live and grow, it must bear witness to what has been revealed to it of truth. Mr Gandhi has declared that no one has any right even in his heart to desire that others should give up their faith for his. This attitude can only be assumed by a sincere man such as Mr Gandhi if he is essentially an agnostic in his religion, moving, like his brethren, among uncertainties. If we have an assured conviction of any vital truth, then not to desire to share it is to show oneself a traitor to truth. The Christian has such assured convictions, and the Indian Christian Church shares them with the universal Church of Christ. The Indian Church does not desire to abandon her testimony to them, but there are certain facts of the situation, peculiar to India, which affect the method

[1] That is, the yellow robe that indicates that the wearer has renounced the world.

of her testimony and the consequences which she should look for from it.

Hitherto the summons of the foreign witnesses to those in India of whom their message has laid hold has been to accept the sacrament of Baptism, confessing their faith, and accepting whatever consequences in suffering that confession may bring. In the circumstances of India this has meant, almost invariably, severance of the convert from his kin and indeed expulsion from the whole Hindu fellowship. It is this that distresses so sorely the Christian nationalist. He finds it bitterly hard to separate himself, as has been so largely the case in the past, from his kindred and from his country and from all that is included in the Hindu heritage. Can the Christian not, then, be a Christian in his faith and in his life without taking the step that separates him from his own people? This is the very time when he desires to identify himself as closely as possible with them in their struggles. Hence we have talk of unbaptized Christians and of Hindu Christians. There are obvious dangers in this attitude, dangers lest what is really cowardice and half-belief will persuade itself by these arguments to inaction and concealment. Faith and courage will find, we have little doubt, that the severance that is feared will not take place, that Christians will be honoured increasingly as true lovers of their country—as many are honoured already—and recognized as entitled to a full share in all that of which they, with their countrymen, are justly proud.

VI

The unwillingness, again, to adopt some of the aggressive western methods of evangelism, as being alien to the spirit of India, may well be justified, and these methods may indeed be alien to the Spirit of Christ. We have all, East or West, to beware lest by the influences that, with the noblest intentions, we bring to bear on men, we should be doing despite to that Spirit. The value of the witness of the life of holiness and devotion has been recognized in a measure in India in past days; still more certainly must it be recognized by every Christian as the greatest and most fruitful of all methods of propagating true religion. New ways of testimony—and especially ways of that truly spiritual order—have need to be discovered and used, and the Christian Church of India will, we trust, discover them. One that is already being employed is the formation of what are called "International Fellowships." These do not aim at winning any victory for any faith, but at the exchange among the adherents of different faiths of sincere religious experience. Mr K. T. Paul describes the aim of this movement as "an inter-religious coming together in an earnest, open-minded, humble, prayerful search for a higher unity and a deeper harmony. It is no cheap sluggish feeling of mutual tolerance but a real human aspiration." To be effective there must be behind it deep earnestness and sincerity. Another new method that is believed to be more in harmony with the Indian spirit than some of the older ones is that of the ashram. The

word comes down from India's religious past, and is employed in the usage of to-day to describe a community life of simplicity whose central purpose will be worship and service, and which will be lived in a spirit of brotherhood by both Indians and foreigners. This method is as yet at the stage of experiment, and sometimes the reality behind the name is very different from what the name suggests. The aims and ideals that the ashram represents are, however, of the highest order, and by its means a real and happy co-operation between East and West may be achieved. There is no testimony that is more likely to hasten the coming to India of the Kingdom of God than that of such co-operation.

There are thus indications that the educated section of the Christian Church are beginning to address themselves to the task, which the future will lay increasingly upon them, of finding a road for Christ Jesus to the heart of India. It is now a commonplace of Christian and missionary policy in this land that the Indian Church must be the centre of all effort and that to its well-being every effort is subsidiary. The Indian Church is the witness to Christ and His Gospel, appointed and ordained by Him. How then is this Church, so poor and—not by its own choice—so divided, to fulfil its calling? It is poor, therefore the methods that the Church can use must be such as are possible to a Church that can be rich in Christian character and devotion, but in nothing else. The methods that we have described are fitted for such a Church to use. It is a Church divided; that hindrance—not, as we have said, of its choosing

—may and must be removed. Accordingly we find all over India a movement, in which educated Indians are eager leaders, towards union. Of the hope of such a union in South India, growing steadily brighter and drawing steadily nearer, and of the dawning of a similar hope in the North, it is not necessary that we should speak here. The end and purpose of such unions is that the Indian Church, becoming more richly Indian, shall be more truly therefore of the Church Universal, and that it shall have the right, as well as the obligation, to undertake its task as the ambassador of Christ to this ancient Indian land.

CHAPTER V

THE CHURCH INARTICULATE AND IN BONDAGE

I

It is of the true nature of the Church of Christ to be free—free as is her Mother, the Church that is above —and, because she is free, she is not dumb. If there is a great body of Christian people in India who have as yet no voice and few thoughts, it is because their minds are still darkened and their bonds not yet loosed. Those who have been taken up out of "the horrible pit" and whose feet are set securely on the rock have also a new song given to them. The Church in India which is as yet inarticulate is that which has come up some way from slavery but upon which the old chains still lie heavy. It is the Church of the outcastes, of those who have come to Christ by means of mass movements. That portion of the Christian Church presents a problem which in India is in some respects unique, and for that reason gives the whole religious situation a peculiarity that differentiates it from that of other lands. It is true, of course, that there is a darkest England, even as there is in India this darkened section of the Christian Church; and how much heavier is the burden of guilt of those who are sinning against the light that has shone so long around them than of those who

walk as yet only in a dim twilight. But the call to us to lighten this dimness is on that account all the more insistent. And it is the more insistent still in that, so long as many are held thus in bondage, the witness that the Church is charged to bear in India is not borne and the Kingdom tarries.

When we speak of a population of four million seven hundred thousand Christians, or even when we narrow our consideration down to the two million seven hundred thousand non-Roman and indigenous Christians, that number, in spite of the immensity of the whole population of the land, might be considered adequate to discharge its apostolate and bear its witness. But if a large section of that Church is as yet very imperfectly taught, and so has no voice to speak and only a halting witness to bear, then the situation is different from what it appears to be. Before the Church can be expected to show India the road out of the dark wood, it must have eyes itself with which to see and strength and conviction to enable it to lead.

Because of the mass movements into the Church the situation here, we have said, is differentiated in some respects from that of other lands. It cannot be claimed that that is so on the ground that there have not been mass movements elsewhere as well as in India. There was a mass movement in Pontus in the third century in the days of Gregory Thaumaturgus, who "would not deprive the people of their pleasures or their religious solemnities, but converted them into something Christian."[1] Another

[1] F. A. Foakes-Jackson, *Studies in the Life of the Early Church*, p. 269.

characteristic of a mass movement is to be observed in the conversion of Clovis when "king and tribal following acted as a unit."[1] And some centuries ago from Travancore St Francis Xavier wrote of a similar kind of movement to those which his Protestant successors have experienced. "In a month," he says, "I baptized more than ten thousand persons. . . . Here is how I baptize: I give to each his (Christian) name in writing." "This piece of paper," adds a modern biographer, "came to have a political as well as a spiritual significance. It was a kind of passport and gave the bearer the rights of protection due to a Portuguese subject."[2] Thus the doubtful elements that we find in mass movements in the recent history of Indian missions are found to be no new thing but to have accompanied similar emotional upheavals elsewhere, similar dawnings of desire among other peoples.

But while these parallels, and others as well, may be discovered between the circumstances in which large numbers in other times and in other lands have thronged into the Church and the circumstances in which these things have happened in India, the position of the outcaste classes in that land is unique in respect of the intolerable burden of their bondage. There is an urgency in the need of the Indian outcastes that makes their desire for deliverance something more than carnal. Their imprisonment is of the soul as well as of the flesh. And as far as Hinduism can do

[1] Henry Osborne Taylor, *The Mediaeval Mind*, p. 193.

[2] E. A. Robertson, *Francis Xavier: Knight Errant of the Cross*, p. 135.

so, it bars finally all escape. What it means to be an outcaste is perhaps sufficiently indicated by the statement in the Report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture that these classes, commonly called "depressed," are "denied the common intercourse of life." An inhuman tradition and a religion of fear combine to crush them.

When Christianity came to India offering to these slaves a way of deliverance, nothing—once they had obtained a glimpse of the way opened to them—could keep multitudes from taking it. It was a real way of deliverance, and it was the only one, unless we reckon death as an alternative. By as sure a law of nature as that by which water finds its own level, these hopeless people would take this road of escape. It was not merely, as in other movements elsewhere, that they followed their leaders or that they obtained secular protection, or even that they recognized Christianity as a more powerful magic than that which they had hitherto practised. What beckoned them was freedom and hope, and these can hardly be counted as unworthy motives to move men. On the one hand no messenger of Him who came to break oppression could refuse to receive such victims; nor, on the other hand, could anyone in whom there was still a spark of manhood remain unmoved before the promise of such a deliverance. Thus need and the Succourer of need met in the mass movements of India with consequences that were inevitable. For the coming of these outcastes into the Church of Christ and their reception there no defence is necessary. It could not be otherwise.

But for what followed afterwards—the nurture of the Church, and what it has grown to—explanation and defence are needed. That company of captives were so far set free that, being baptized into the body of Christ, they were delivered from many of the chains of cruel custom and tradition that Hinduism had laid upon them. But the process is inevitably a slow one by which those so long enslaved shall be baptized into His Spirit, and until that is achieved in greater measure they are far off still from freedom. "A real hunger after a better life, a growing self-respect, a dawning sense of independence, a desire that their children should be better than they—these are now potent influences in the situation. And these they owe to Christ." [1]

II

We know that no magic word can transform, as in an instant, old deeply-ingrained habits of evil. Only the co-operation of the Divine Spirit with a mind and will growing in enlightenment and in purpose can achieve it. And this is the more so the deeper these evils have been wrought into the fibre of a man's nature and a tradition of degradation created. How grimly this is true of the outcastes of India has to be realized before we pass judgment on the slowness of their growth to better things. The servitude produced by habits created through centuries of economic dependence and by the dread of human and of super-

[1] Wesleyan Mission Report (1928), Medak, Nizam's Dominions, p. 16.

human punishment—these enslavements combined to form a chain that lay so heavily upon them that it seemed, and even now sometimes seems, unbreakable. These strands of evil are interwound with each other, strengthening each other to a result that almost appears beyond possibility of cure. The economic servitude under which they lie is described by a Mass Movement Commission, which in 1918 investigated the Telugu area, in three propositions which, they say, "may be advanced without any doubt whatever as to their substantial truth." They are as follows :—

(1) A very large number of Christians are serfs, in debt to caste masters, chiefly the Patels[1] of the villages, and bound to serve them as long as they live for a mere pittance. (2) Many other Christians have a small piece of land, not sufficient to yield a livelihood, and they try to make up what is lacking by casual field labour on a wage which for men may be as little as two rupees a month and is never more than three. (3) Almost all, even those who own sufficient land, are in debt to the Patel or village money-lender.

That was in 1918. Eleven years later in the same area, though there has been real progress, the reports still tell in some districts of an economic condition "appallingly bad." "There is not a single village [in one district] where our Christian boys are not in bondage to the money-lender."[2]

Not only is the burden of indebtedness crushing

[1] The village headmen.

[2] Wesleyan Mission Report (1929), Medak, Nizam's Dominions, p. 21.

self-respect out of the people, but a system of serf-hood, as indicated here, prevails in many parts of the country. A man will not only sell himself to life-long slavery but will mortgage his children. " In one village . . . every pariah child as soon as it was born was having a price paid for it in the caste village. The caste masters were buying up the future labour of the children but newly born, much as they would add lambs to their flock." [1] " The method is one by which the larger landowner secures cheap labour for his fields ; and it is not to the interest of the master that the serf should ever clear his debt." The one advantage of this system is that the serf, having a money value to his owner, may be kept alive in a time of famine, just as he would keep alive his bullocks. " The evils of the system," as the Telugu Mass Movement Report points out, " are moral even more than economic ; it breeds the improvident, unambitious, servile disposition." Poverty creates a habit of dishonesty. " They eke out their earnings by petty pilferings." One in that position is really over and beyond the " margin of subsistence " ; but he contrives to bring himself to the edge and hang on there by stealing.

These statements are made of the Telugu area, but they apply to multitudes in similar circumstances in every province. Economic injustice and moral degradation are linked up together. The soul and the body cannot, so long as men live in the world, be wholly divorced. When a man's children are crying at home for food and himself weak with under-

[1] G. E. Phillips, *The Outcastes' Hope*, p. 12.

nourishment, can it be expected that he will resist temptations when they come or that his conscience will be active and awake? "The laziness of the people," writes a great lover of the Mang Christians of the Maratha area, "the deceit of the people, are nothing to the struggle we have against this lack of rain. It makes everything futile." [1] Is man a body that has a soul, or a soul that has a body? One sometimes wonders in India if the bed-rock of every problem is not poverty. "Lying, systematic and ingrained," [2] is only a protective armour against hunger.

Alongside of these cruelties that drain out of them all strength and courage of soul, there is the fear that their religion breeds. That religion is not Hinduism, in our common understanding of that word, but is mainly the product of the ancient and deep-seated terrors of the night and of the unknown in which all religion has its human roots. But in their case nothing higher has sublimated that haunting dread. "The constant fear of unknown and unknowable evil powers conspiring at every turn to do harm is not a soil on which qualities like self-confidence, independence, and love of truth can grow. On the other hand, it develops in them subservience, cowardice, self-depreciation, dishonesty and other evils. All of them being the outgrowth of their religious life enter vitally into the make-up of their character and tend to keep them the most degraded among men." [3] "It seems, indeed," writes Mr G. E. Phillips, "as if the out-

[1] N. Macnicol, *Tom Dobson*, p. 144. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 143.
[3] P. O. Philip, *The Depressed Classes and Christianity*, p. 17.

caste's religion is quite as effective an instrument of his degradation as the social system which has made him what he is." [1]

In such a soil of ignorance and oppression and superstition it is inevitable that a rich crop of vices shall grow and flourish. Of these, drunkenness is inevitably one. If in the West the public-house is resorted to as the shortest road out of Manchester or Glasgow, a similar road is certain to be taken by those who desire to escape from an existence far more drab. " The fellowship of the toddy-pot is the only sodality in the outcaste's life—the one gleam of ease and comfort that shines at the end of the long, hot day of wearying toil." [2] Similarly, sexual morality is often low among these classes. This is the case, for example, among the Chamars, leather-workers of the north, great numbers of whom have come into the Christian Church. It is surely nothing strange that people who have been treated for centuries as if they were cattle should come to reckon themselves as such. They are rebels against the social order which is for them in the main the moral order likewise, and, if their rebellion has not led them further than it has, the reason is to be found for the most part in the fact that they have been bled white by their oppressors and little energy remains in them.

Such classes of people might well seem to form a hopeless soil in which to cultivate a Christian character. Nor could we hope that this would be so if

[1] *The Outcastes' Hope*, p. 16.

[2] Wesleyan Mission Mass Movement Commission Report, 1918, p. 30.

no gleam of desire for better things still lingered in them. But they, too, have had their saints. Of one of them it is said that, when he entered a Hindu temple and was flung out with violence, he pleaded that he had been borne in against his will by the god's own divine power. He went on to defend himself, the story goes, in these words :

What avails birth in high caste, what avail rites or learning, if there is no devotion or faith ? Though a man be of low caste, yet if he be faithful in heart and loves God, and regards all creatures as though they were like himself, and makes no distinction between his own and other people's children, and speaks the truth, his caste is pure, and God is pleased with him. Never ask a man's caste when he has in his heart faith in God and love of men. God wants in his children love and devotion, and He does not care for caste.

If, even among those treated with such contumely by the representatives of the established religion, these convictions still sometimes took root and blossomed, we need not despair of their growing within the Christian Church, through the grace and knowledge of Christ, to the full manhood that is theirs in Him.

Nor have we any right to say that even these people that seem to us so degraded have not made sacrifices already for Christ's sake. If what they have given up seems to us pitifully little, it is not so when measured by their poverty. Their masters have no desire that these uncomplaining serfs should escape from their yoke, and they put every obstacle in their way to hold them in the old bondage. Outcastes though

they are, they have sometimes privileges which help to bring them some means of subsistence. Thus the Mangs of the Deccan are expected to beat a drum in connection with certain ceremonies and so to serve the very temples that they dare not enter. When, as Christians, they surrender such a privilege, they surrender something that helps to give them some security in a life from which they have learned to expect little. The way of Christ, as they have to be taught from the beginning, is a way of sacrifice, and, having taken the first step to Him along that road, they may yet learn all that is meant by following Him.

III

Such is the material out of which, by the Spirit of God, through His ministers, has to be moulded a Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing. However defiled they may be by past tradition and by cruel treatment, however shrivelled or wrinkled through the starvation of their souls, yet, if they really come to Him by the way of faith, He will make them again according to His purpose. And He is assuredly so making them again at this time. That they have all so come to Him we cannot maintain. In Assam there were seven thousand Christians in 1881, and in forty years that number increased to a hundred and thirty-two thousand. The percentage of increase in the Punjab in the same period was 1134.3, while in the Telugu area farther south " the Protestant Christian community is increasing at the rate of about twenty-five thousand to thirty thousand

per annum with a rising tendency." In the next five years, the Bishop of Dornakal wrote in 1926, "we are likely to be called upon to receive as many outcastes as we have received in the previous eighty," and in the ten years up to 1926 they had received forty-three thousand. It can scarcely be disputed that the vision of Christ that has drawn these multitudes can have been little more than a fleeting glimpse, and that the task of making the vision real to them cannot but be long and arduous. That motives which were un-Christian were often present and powerful in the minds of many who swelled these movements, we may be sure.

Missionaries, knowing their own hearts, have to confess with sorrow that ambition and vanity and the mere desire for big things may have sometimes influenced them, while self-interest and the desire to improve their social status or to fill their empty stomachs have certainly in the past moved many of those who sought admission to the Church. Along with a "divine discontent," there is the drive of desperate need. It is, no doubt, for reasons such as these that Mr Gandhi refuses to admit that Christianity has done anything to uplift the outcaste. It probably appears to him that the Christian evangelist, when he comes with his message to these people, is moved by the same selfish desire for the aggrandisement of his sect or his community as moves the Moslem or Hindu "communalist" to-day. The one convincing proof that can be advanced to demonstrate that this is not a true charge is in the life and labours of those, Indians and foreigners, who strive

day and night to make these "outcaste Christians" Christians indeed. The evidence of life in them is growth, and the evidence of sincerity in those who serve and teach them is their travail in their behalf that Christ may be born in them. These are arguments that no one can refute.

Without doubt mistakes have been made in the guidance of these people, mistakes that have hindered their growth to full Christian manhood. It is hard for us to believe whole-heartedly in the power of the divine Spirit. We would supplement His operations by more secular means. And of these money is the easiest to call to our aid and the most difficult so to make use of as not to thwart the divine purpose. "From the very beginning of things in this district," writes one of the most passionately unselfish of workers for these people, referring to the Jalna District, "the people have been so poor that the missionaries have felt that they must always be giving. . . . Their need is great—O, it is pitifully great—and the temptation to give a rupee and get rid of them is very great; but it passes the wisdom or capacity of this man or his neighbour to devise schemes and plans for their real help or to find time to accomplish anything for them." The easy road is never the road to men's training in character, and there is no short cut to that goal. "One of the curses of mission work in this district," wrote the same great-hearted lover of men, "has been the ease with which forgiveness has been earned and obtained. Many an evil has been thus lightly esteemed because all that is needed is to confess to the Saheb after being

found out, and a few judicious tears will make all smooth." So he asks, as every worker among these people has need to ask, that his friends should pray for him that he be "neither too hard nor too soft," and that he have "the wisdom of some few Solomons." [1]

Another aspect of this temptation to take the easy and the kindly road that the worker among these oppressed people has to overcome springs from his very sense of indignation at their oppression. The Rev. Barakat Ulla, who has an intimate acquaintance with the Chuhrahs, three hundred and twenty-nine thousand of whom have entered the Church in the Punjab, writes as follows in regard to them: "The Chuhrahs were an oppressed people, oppressed by *Zamindars*,[2] ruined by money-lenders, tyrannized over by the police and other petty officials, and looked down upon by the generality of the people. Christianity came to them as a mighty liberating force and, naturally, Christian missionaries became their champions, ready to fight their battles for them. The result of this championship," he goes on, "through a long period of years, is that it has made the once lowly Christian proud and insolent and is now proving a hindrance to village Church life." Also, according to this witness, "the non-Christian villager only sees that Christianity is a physical force and not a soul force. Under the circumstances how can we expect him to know the true and lovable character of our

[1] This passage and the passages quoted above are from the author's *Tom Dobson, a Champion of the Outcastes*, pp. 136 and 162.

[2] Landowners.

holy religion, and how can we expect to make village Churches self-propagating Churches ? " [1]

It is easy to see how this mistaken policy may have been followed as a result of too eager a zeal to redress the wrongs of those who have so long had to endure injustice. And so the oppressed becomes himself the oppressor, and judgment and the love of God still tarry.

Another form of organized unrighteousness that had held these people so long in its thrall and which can have no place within the Church of Christ is the system of caste. It would have been supposed that here at least was something of which the Christian must make a final end. But even here sometimes there has been compromise and accommodation and the choice of the easier road. This has been so especially in the case of the Roman Catholic missions of the South. How far Robert de Nobili can be charged with surrendering essential Christian principles from a desire to win the higher castes is a question about which there may be difference of opinion, but there can be none as to the surrender made by other Roman Catholic missionaries in their desire to satisfy the caste prejudices of those who despised the outcaste Christians. There are accordingly to-day " ancient Christian churches in South India into which outcastes are not even allowed to set foot : they are left without. The modern Roman Catholic missions have erected churches for their congregations of caste origin at one end of the village

[1] These passages are taken from an article by Mr Barakat Ulla in the *National Christian Council Review* for May 1927.

and other churches for pariahs at the other end." [1] But this surrender of an essential of the Christian faith does not take place only in the Roman Catholic Church. "In some Protestant Churches," the Mass Movement Commission Report of the Wesleyan Church goes on to tell us, describing what was sometimes to be found twelve years ago, "a dividing line is drawn in the congregation beyond which the Christians of outcaste origin must on no account advance. Even the fellowship of the Holy Communion is broken, and Christians in the act of remembering the dying of their Lord will not consent to eat and drink in common. This is the evil and the enduring legacy of concession to caste prejudice."

Where this old enemy has not been subdued, the Church is rent by strife and bitter antagonism. A Hindu observer, referring to Christians from the outcaste classes in Cochin, remarks that "they are not admitted to social equality with other Christians." This, we are told, "is a root of much bitterness and is keeping non-Christians from entering the Church." [2] In greater or less measure the same can be said of other Churches throughout the land. Nor can foreign missions and foreign missionaries be freed from blame in the matter. Their denominational rivalries have contributed to accentuate these class differences. It was even the case not many years ago that, throughout a whole district, one mission could be found

[1] *The Mass Movement Commission Report*, Wesleyan Mission, p. 26.

[2] *The Mass Movement in Travancore*, Church Missionary Society, 1926.

evangelizing one caste and creating a caste church at one end of each village, while another mission was doing the same for a different caste at the other end of the same village. Just as we know that there is no enemy of the Christian message to-day in the wider world that is more formidable than the racial antagonism that poisons the air we breathe, so in India and within the Indian Church, nothing is more fatal to growth than is the disunity created by this evil spirit of caste which is not yet wholly exorcised.

These examples suggest to us that the slowness of the growth in Christian character of this Church among the outcastes is not solely due to the depth of the degradation from which they have to be redeemed, but also, in some measure, to the lack of faith and courage and insight of their guides and guardians. Theirs is an error that is as old as Gregory Thaumaturgus and one that every one of us "hasty workers" is liable to fall into. Gregory, we are told, "slightly lessened the strain upon those who had accepted the yoke of the faith, in order to let them enjoy good cheer in life." If there are any people—far more than the people of Pontus—to whom we might well desire to give an opportunity to "enjoy good cheer in life," it is those who have come into the Christian Church from the cheerless existence of the outcaste. And yet to make the way of the Cross easy may be to defraud these Christians of their birthright, even as the Hindus had defrauded them before. No wonder the worker among the Jalna Christians cried out for "the wisdom of some few Solomons."

But through errors of judgment, from which no one of us is exempt, and even through failures of courage and of faith, there gleams in the case of these Christian workers among the outcastes, Indian and foreign, the glow of a life of unselfish love, and it is that which wins its way to the hearts of the people for whom that life is lived and which calls them on to higher things. St Francis Xavier might sometimes so far faint in his faith as to call the powers of the King of Portugal to the aid of his evangelism: he might trust too much to the effect of a magical baptism. And yet so long as he went among the people, barefooted, in his tattered tunic, but glowing with the flame of his love to Christ, there must have been many among those whom he received into the Church who reached through him to Christ and touched Him. "I am a poor Amboinese with no learning," said one of his converts. "I don't know what it is to be a Christian, and I don't know what God is, but I know one thing which Father Francis taught me, that it is good to die for Jesus Christ. Because Father Francis said this I can't become a Mohammedan." [1]

It has been so also with many Protestant Christians among these mass movement converts, men and women whose Christianity has been mediated by the love and steadfastness that they could see reflected from Christ in those who had brought them His deliverance. Nothing less than the divine life itself has reached them and touched them and healed them. Slow as their growth has been, for their minds are

[1] E. A. Stewart, *St Francis Xavier*, p. 252.

sluggish and their blood is torpid, still they are growing and the life of God is in them. "It is one of the finest things," says Tom Dobson of Jalna, "to see 'the knowledge of the love of God' actually at work in uplifting poor, depressed and despised people. 'Flowers of Thy heart, O God, are they!'" [1]

IV

These and other hindrances to the growth in character and influence of the Christian Church cause deep disappointment to the more eager and aspiring section of it. To the educated Indian Christian it seems sometimes that he is bound to an inert body, unresponsive either to Christian hopes or to materialist ambitions. He perhaps feels more drawn to the non-Christian of his own educated and enlightened class and kind. The Indian Christian Church, he feels, "has failed to make itself count in movements affecting the common welfare"; [2] and so the Christian nationalist is drawn by other sympathies away from his fellow-Christians and towards more enlightened elements within the national life.

These charges brought against the inarticulate and unawakened section of the Church can hardly be denied. Those who for so many centuries were left in outer darkness, beyond the pale of Hindu society, or, so far as there was a nation, of the nation's life —these cannot be expected to assume at once the privileges and duties which have so long been denied

[1] *Tom Dobson*, p. 164.
[2] *The Indian Approach to India* (K. K. Kuruvilla), p. 144.

to them. It is indeed an astonishing fact that those who have been so treated have yet shed their blood again and again in defence of their country and of men who refused to acknowledge their brotherhood with them. Surely this gives us a guarantee that they will not fail in duty to their nation as their spirits, so long starved and torpid, recover health through breathing the atmosphere of Christ. But that duty is, after all, secondary in our concern to their growth in the grace and the knowledge of their Lord. From that primary relationship all lesser goods will follow.

How then, we ask, is that being achieved? Is the life of the Spirit stirring in these people's veins? The growth may be slow, but if there is growth, then we need not despair. Even if there is no more growth than that described by one worker among the Christians of this class in the Punjab, yet that also shows that the sap of life is mounting in the gnarled branches. "As to getting the people to lead Christian lives," he says, "that is, to make lying, stealing, impurity and fighting things which are condemned by the whole community—I have little doubt but that real progress has been made. Christians still do bad things but their moral sense has improved. Lying and stealing have become sins, and fighting and quarrelling are also becoming recognized as evils." That is to say, in Dr Stanley Jones's phrase, those Christians having only been "horizontally converted," their "vertical conversion" is now beginning, a task that is peculiarly difficult among these people. They have had no experience in the past of the discipline

that is required for their instruction in righteousness. Congregational worship is something that is unknown even in the higher Hinduism, though attempts are now being made to introduce it. But "the Panchamas [1] have no regular daily worship and no scriptures to expound." So, "when the Christian religion is embraced by an outcaste community, it brings to them a new institution, and the cost of establishing and maintaining this is a new demand upon them for which nothing in their past has prepared them." [2]

They are willing, however, to submit themselves to the discipline of this instruction, and it is the duty of the missions that seek to serve the Church and that have invited these people to enter it, to care diligently for their nurture and guidance. Whether these elder Churches have discharged their responsibility in all cases with full diligence we cannot here consider. It is at least realized in some measure that there is no duty more urgently laid upon all the Churches in India than this. "The needs of the rural community," the Report of the Jerusalem Meeting declares, "are grave and urgent. . . . It is therefore time for missions to realize that, along with a more effective type of education for children and youth, it is urgently necessary to carry out a programme of adult and mass education, through the eye and ear and through individual and corporate activities, in regard to all those matters which are

[1] The South Indian outcastes.

[2] *Mass Movement Commission Report*, Wesleyan Methodist Mission, p. 12.

responsible for afflicting the rural people with disease, drunkenness, poverty, indebtedness, litigation, and superstition, as well as in all the constructive ideas and ideals that lift people to higher levels of life." [1]

The aim of missionary education in the case of these rural communities is now recognized to be the training of children for life and especially for rural life. The teachers trained by the Presbyterian Mission at Moga in the Punjab—and this example is being followed widely among missions throughout the country—" are trained "—to quote the Report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture—" in community work and service ; they are taught to participate in the healthful activities of village life, and to put their hands to practical use in whatever way they can." [2]

This is not an easy ideal, but the more fully and faithfully it is carried out, the more the churches in these village areas will discover their Christian souls. Hand in hand with the village school goes the village church, both together seeking to bring up old and young alike in " the nurture and admonition of the Lord." All the solemn worship of the Church has to be so used that these people, so long crushed downward to the earth, shall be drawn upwards by it. Among the Franks of the sixth century, we are told, " the general character of Christian observances —baptism, the Mass, prayer, the sign of the Cross, the rites at marriage, sickness and death—could not fail

[1] *Report of the Jerusalem Meeting*, Vol. VI., p. 293.
[2] *Report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture*, p. 528.

to impress a certain tone and demeanour upon the people, and impart some sense of human sinfulness." [1] It is the same still. "We know in experience," writes the Bishop of Dornakal of the Telugu Christians whose overseer he is, "of nothing that inspires devotion, touches the emotions and strengthens the will of the village folk as the reverent and intelligent observance of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper." [2]

No one has worked for the uplift of this slowly awakening Church more wisely and more wholeheartedly than the Bishop of Dornakal. He knows the pit from which they have been digged and he sees them steadily climbing upwards to the full light and freedom that are theirs in Christ Jesus. He describes what he sees around him of the change that has been wrought: poverty, drunkenness, dirt, transformed into sobriety and honesty and Christian worship. And then he asks, "What is the cause of the change? The cause is the evangelist and his wife who had lived in the midst of the people and brought them, through example and patient teaching, into the saving power of the Gospel of Christ. These evangelists have had no money to spend on the people; they have given no gifts; they wield no influence on those in authority; they have only given them Jesus Christ." [3]

These outcaste Christians are thus learning to live for Jesus Christ: they have shown also that they can suffer for His cause. Some of them have even

[1] Henry Osborne Taylor, *The Mediæval Mind*, I., p. 195.
[2] *The Christian Task in India*, p. 42.
[3] *The World Call to the Church: The Call from India*, p. 56.

discovered, like the "poor Amboinese" whose story has already been told, that it is good to die for Jesus Christ. The hour of death was called by some wise Scottish weavers long ago "the honest hour," and many mass movement Christians pass without failure the test of its revelation. "It is a fact familiar to all who work among mass movements," writes Mr G. E. Phillips, "that these humble Christians die wonderfully well." [1] "The persecution that they face is frequently real and painful. 'Many are the marks and stripes that I have seen on the backs of our people because they have refused to labour on the Lord's Day, or pilfer grain from their neighbours' fields or join in some idolatrous ceremonies,' wrote Bishop Gill of Travancore." [2] We can pass no judgment of condemnation on men and women who, however unable to give a reason for their faith in words, bear such testimony to it by their deeds.

The witness of the critical onlooker confirms the evidence of the change in character that is coming about in those once so degraded and despised. The zamindar who employs them finds it now to his advantage to pay them better wages than he pays to others and so to secure their honest service.[3] The English Census Officer of the United Provinces (1911) tells us that the Hindu fellows of the converts of that area have to acknowledge that they are better men than they, and the Hindu Census Superintendent of the Mysore State declares that "the enlighten-

[1] *The Outcastes' Hope*, p. 93.
[2] W. S. Hunt, *India's Outcastes*, p. 57.
[3] *The Call from India*, p. 56.

ing influence of Christianity is patent in the higher standard of comfort of the converts and their sober, disciplined and busy lives." [1] If this is in any measure a true testimony, and if, instead of the squalor and misery of the past, we find indeed within this Church the sober, disciplined and busy lives of Christian men and women, then we can be sure that this is a transformation that can have been wrought only by the power of God.[2]

That is the testimony that many a Hindu who has known Christian *Madigas* [3] or Christian sweepers, as, probably, Mr Gandhi has had no opportunity of knowing them, is ready to bear. Narayan Vaman Tilak when he saw the Christians from these outcaste classes in Ahmednagar declared that he needed no other miracle than that to prove Christianity to be divine. The discovery, by themselves and by others,

[1] These quotations are taken from the Bishop of Dornakal's article in *The Christian Task in India*, pp. 31 *et seq.* Compare also the testimonies by Hindus quoted by the Bishop in his article in the *International Review of Missions*, Vol. XVIII., pp. 514 *et seq.*

[2] The situation in Travancore is summed up in the C.M.S. Report for 1926, as follows: "All who have had to do with these Christians are quite sure that there are saints among them. They have been touched by Christ and cleansed. Their lives bear witness to the fact. But there are others who betray only too frequently the lingering taint of bygone years. They have been brought to Christ, but have not been brought into vital contact with Him. So it seems to us. But again, generally speaking, all are on a higher plane, morally, mentally, spiritually—are, with all their limitations, inwardly cleaner—than their non-Christian fellows. Christ has not left them orphans. The Holy Spirit, we cannot doubt, is working in their midst. But they need constant and regular help, continual 'building up in their most holy faith,' edification."

[3] A caste of leather-workers.

that they can so rise and need not lie for ever in sub-human bondage has, no doubt, furnished part of the stimulus that is awakening the outcastes on all sides to claim the rights of which they have been so long defrauded. The new spirit is showing itself in the abandonment by them of old, humiliating names; the Pariah has become the Adi Dravida.[1] It shows itself also in bold demands to be allowed to use the village wells and worship in village temples. By *Satyagraha* or passive resistance and suffering on the part of the outcastes themselves, some of the worst humiliations inflicted upon them in the headquarters of caste insolence in Travancore have been removed or mitigated. Another sign of a new spirit that is showing itself in the case of the Christians through the influence of a warmer sense of brotherhood is their recognition of their kinship with the non-Christian outcastes from among whom they have come. This is a movement "directed against political or social separation of Christians of pariah origin from the depressed classes who have not yet found a way out of their misery." "Christianity," these Christians of outcaste origin say in a memorial presented to the Simon Commission, "represents a religious spirit. It does not in India confer a new skin or a new bone, nor does it make its adherents into a separate caste." [2]

This new spirit that nationalism has done much

[1] This name implies a claim that they belong to the original race that possessed South India in pre-Aryan times.

[2] Quoted in Mayhew's *Christianity and the Government of India*, p. 248.

to arouse is not necessarily a Christian spirit, but it can co-operate with the Spirit of Christ in creating self-respect and in making the Christian Church conscious of itself and of its high calling. On all sides now the outcaste is being wooed back to the Hindu fold. It is well that a profession of faith in Christ should not be the only road to decency and freedom. It is well, too, that the way should be open for those who so desire to return to their old Hindu allegiance. The choice of the obedience of Christ must be a choice that is freely made, for the Church that truly serves Him is constrained only by His love. . . .

Most striking of all in its witness to the transformation that Christ has wrought in the character of these outcastes is the fact that the testimony of their lives is now moving even the stubborn hearts of their oppressors. This miracle has begun to happen in the Telugu area of the Nizam's Dominions. In 1927 the Wesleyan Mission in that field reported "quite as amazing a mass movement among the caste Hindus as has ever been witnessed among those outside caste." A year later the report tells that during 1928 five hundred and sixty-four caste people were baptized and more than six thousand were being prepared for baptism. In the neighbouring area of which the Bishop of Dornakal has charge a similar miracle is being wrought. "Not merely one individual here and there," writes the Bishop, "has come out by the witness of an outcaste Christian convert, but whole groups and villages are coming out under the leadership of once outcaste but now Christian teachers." [1]

[1] *International Review of Missions*, Vol. XVIII., p. 516.

Some years ago in another district an outcaste Christian, looking round on a gathering of his fellow-Christians in a Christian Church and seeing among them some of their old caste oppressors, still Hindus, but drawn there by the transformed lives of the outcastes, was moved by the spirit of prophecy. "Here we see," he said, using language that would be better understood in a land where there are no lions and few lambs, "the fulfilment of the word of the prophet Isaiah, 'The tiger shall lie down with the kid.'" He might have added as the strangest element of all in his picture of these tamed and transformed oppressors, "And an outcaste man shall lead them."

We can see the love of Christ slowly but surely pervading and transforming this Church of the "mass movement" areas, remaking it after the image of Him that created it. It is a slow process with us all; it cannot but be slow in a Church so sinned against through its dark past as this one has been. Few know the village Church of the Telugu land better than Miss Christlieb, author of *An Uphill Road in India.* "Schools," she says, "teachers, congregations, pastors, churches, as well as missionaries have a slow and difficult and steep ascent before them in India." Again, reverting to the same subject, she writes: "'Until the whole is leavened.' The daring confidence of that 'until'! Out here, often, the dough seems more like stone, and the leaven intolerably slow. Then I think of Raja Shekara, the beloved, and his almost perfect representation of Christ in our midst. Dwelling on the thought of

him a great hope arises, and, looking at these others, I dare repeat after him, 'Until.'" [1]

As long as there are "Raja Shekaras, the beloved" in the Church of the mass-movement areas, men and women in whom the Spirit of Christ reigns, we are assured that there His Church lives, His incarnation continues.

[1] *An Uphill Road in India*, p. 234.

PART THREE

THE FOREIGN MISSION

CHAPTER VI

Our main purpose throughout this study has been to understand—as far as one can with such a tangled skein—the religious mind of contemporary India. We have seen it in one aspect as a turbid storm-tossed sea, in another aspect as a fen of stagnant waters. Alongside of that bewildered scene we have placed the Indian Church, itself confused and divided, but with a slowly emerging purpose that may make it one day united and strong. There is one element remaining to be considered as having an important function in this *milieu*. We are viewing India, not as a political or an economic problem, but as bearing within her the promise and potency of a future in which God's will for her shall be accomplished and His Kingdom shall have come. For the realization of that hope to which we look the chief responsibility must rest upon the labours—"by the strength and under the eyes of God"—of His Church in this land. But alongside of her, and secondary to her, stand and will, we trust, continue to stand, the missions sent by the older Churches to serve her for these ends. Their place and function are determined by three things: first, the character and authority of the message with which

they, with the Indian Church herself, have been entrusted for India; secondly, the spirit that is required in the messengers both because of the message that they bring and because of the mood and temper of those to whom they bring it; and, third, the relation that they must bear to their fellow-Christians with whom they share their task. Our final business is accordingly to determine, as far as we are able, the place and function of foreign missions in the India that we have described, as that place and that function are determined by these three considerations.

I

What, then, is the character and authority of the message which these missions have brought to India? We cannot refuse to return to this question and to reconsider it in the light of Indian facts and Indian attitudes at the present time. The Christian missionary has usually believed that in coming to India he was obeying a divine call and could not do otherwise. Even so, however, it is necessary that he should verify from time to time the terms of his call—that he should, like Christian, pluck the roll out of his bosom and re-peruse it. We have to recognize that the circumstances in which the foreign missionary comes to India to-day with his Christian message are in some important respects different from those in which—let us say—Henry Martyn, after nine months at sea, landed in Calcutta in 1806, and that the intellectual climate which he brings with him from Europe or America is still more radically different from that which Francis

Xavier brought with him when he landed in Goa in May 1542. We have travelled a long way, in respect of the trappings of our lives, from what was available for the messenger of Christ to India four hundred or even a hundred years ago. Most of us can only follow very far behind these saints in their love of Christ and their lives of sacrifice, and every missionary will desire that he should be constrained by the spirit that constrained them. But in other and less central matters there is a difference that we should not ignore that differentiates them from even the most earnest of their successors. The significance and the implications of the divine love have in some important respects a different aspect for us from what they had for them. Thus the human race does not seem now so simple a chequer-board of black and white, of good and bad, as it seemed then. And there are things that to us appear wholly irreconcilable with belief in the love of God that did not in former days appear so clearly so. It has been made manifest far more plainly than it was to our fathers that God's Spirit has been striving always in all men's hearts and that their hearts have never been wholly closed to His ministry. This we know better than they because the whole world has been brought closer together. The Indian or the Chinese is not to us an abstraction, but a near kinsman of our own, thinking the same thoughts. As we have got to know men better our pretensions of superiority have been pricked, and we can no longer strut upon the stage of the world with such airs of patronage as formerly were possible.

The result of all this is—to quote the words of some

candid American scholars who have recently been considering the present position of the Christian missionary enterprise—that "the Westerner" is in danger of "being robbed of that stoutness of heart and finality of conviction that are the indispensable equipment of the conqueror and the propagandist alike." If it is in any wise true that these changes are coming about we are bound to ask the question, Has the Church any longer an authoritative commission to send forth its missionaries with the message of Christ Jesus to such a land as India? Have we a message that India needs and cannot do without, and can we say still, "Necessity is laid upon me, yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel"?

To answer these questions we must consider whether there is in the Christian message something vital and necessary for us men, as children of God. That that is so is the conviction of the Jerusalem Council. "We believe," they say, "that men are made for Christ and cannot really live apart from Him."[1] In earlier days, if a non-Christian questioned the truth of some Christian doctrine, it seemed to the messengers of that time enough to reply, "The Bible says so." In the world in which we now live that answer cannot be reckoned as final or convincing. The authorization of our message must be something less simple and less external to our reason and our conscience than that appears to be. "The centre of gravity in religion," to quote Dean Inge, "has shifted from authority to experience."

This change which has come about is one that we

[1] *The World Mission of Christianity*, p. 11.

have no reason to dread. So long as it was simply a question of the authority of the Bible on the one hand and of the Vedas or the Koran on the other, there was no possibility of the two groups of ideas really meeting. As a matter of fact the Christian missionary, whether or not he claimed unexamined authority for his own Scriptures, invariably demanded that the documents on the other side should be open to the scrutiny of reason. An able young Indian Christian in an account of his conversion to Christianity tells us how under the guidance of missionaries he tested the Hindu Scriptures and rejected them. "Naturally," he goes on, "I began to use my reason to test the facts of the Bible. Then, to my utter surprise and indignation, missionaries with whom I came in contact said that I was to take for granted that every word of the Bible was inspired by God, whether the facts contained in it were historically and scientifically possible or not." [1]

We cannot now take these things for granted. Religion has to be tested by its value in experience; claims of authority have to be tested by reason. Hindus and Moslems are even coming to realize that this is the bar at which religion has to be judged, and that, as Professor Radhakrishnan says, it has to be asked of it whether it "cures its followers of the swell of passion, the thrust of desire, and the blindness of temper." [2] Dr Stanley Jones is doing a great service to religion in India by demonstrating to non-Christians that this is the real criterion of a religion's value. He sets them about a "Round Table" and asks them to

[1] *National Christian Council Review*, 1925, p. 573.
[2] *The Hindu View of Life*, p. 60.

testify to their experience of how their religion has helped them in the dark hours of life. Some of them have complained to him that this is an exercise to which they are wholly unaccustomed. That they should begin to ask such questions of their religion is surely good, for it is just so that it, or any religion, is proved to have value or to be only useless lumber of the spirit.

What, then, is the effect upon the missionary of this change in our religious and theological attitude and outlook? The messengers of the religions of authority come, saying, "This is the true doctrine; receive it as such." This is what has been described as the "imperialistic element" in the approach of Christianity to non-Christian lands. If that element has now to be abandoned, do we not at the same time abandon the claim that our message has a divine origin and sanction, such as gives it superiority to other religions? Professor Heinrich Frick of Marburg has recently made the unqualified claim that on a conviction of the superiority of its message "Christianity will always base its missionary endeavour."[1] It is difficult to see how any Christian can disagree with that view. What needs definition, however, is the precise sense in which we interpret the word "superiority" and the consequences in regard to our message which we deduce from it.

To what do we attribute the superiority which we claim for our message and which constrains us to make it known to the world's end? To the fact that we believe that our message has a divine origin—that

[1] *International Review of Missions*, Vol. XV., p. 646.

we are, as St Paul says, "ambassadors on behalf of Christ, as though God were intreating by us."[1] God does not speak to men by us exclusively, but, because we are ambassadors on behalf of Christ, we can claim that He speaks by us pre-eminently. If, however, this superiority of the message with which we have been entrusted consisted in its excellence as a body of doctrines, as a creed to be subscribed to, then our method of conveying it would not be such as St Paul describes. The appeal in that case would be solely to the reason and the method wholly that of argument and debate. But Christianity, because of what it essentially is, makes a deeper demand than would be the case if it were primarily a doctrine or a metaphysic.[2]

What Christianity primarily is, is described in a sentence in the Prologue to the Gospel of St John—"Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."[3] That is to say, Christianity is a disclosure of a gracious character in God and a revelation of His truth—both of these being gifts from above—and these are conveyed to men through the personality and acts of Jesus Christ. What is most significant here is the fact of the bestowal of this grace and truth, as a gift from God, seeing that otherwise it would be wholly beyond our human reach. What is called Amida Buddhism in Japan and some of the *bhakti* doctrines in India have a similar conception of a descent of grace, but

[1] 2 Cor. v. 20.

[2] Compare what Professor A. N. Whitehead says: "Christianity has always been a religion seeking a metaphysic, in contrast to Buddhism [and, we may add, Hinduism], which is a metaphysic generating a religion."—*Religion in the Making*, p. 39.

[3] John i. 17.

the spirit of the religion in each of these cases makes the conceptions both of grace and of salvation fundamentally different from those of Christianity. Their doctrine is the creation of a deep longing for a Saviour, but it remains the mere shadow of their desire, a legendary fancy.[1] Thus the "given-ness" of Christianity on the one hand; and on the other, the fact that what is given is not a law, a ritual, a book, but a historical person who is known in personal fellowship and affection—these are the two primary characteristics of the Christian message, providing it with an unchallengeable authority and at the same time guarding it against methods of externality and of compulsion in its proclamation. We are ambassadors on behalf of Christ, with the ambassador's high dignity. But at the same time, as St Paul goes on, this ambassador does not command or browbeat; it is as "though God were intreating by us: we beseech you." The message is high, authoritative, coming down from God out of heaven. But its method of operation is such as works through the charm and the appeal of a character and personality, Jesus Christ, winning men's free affection.

It is a common claim made nowadays—and made especially in behalf of the tolerance of Hinduism—that all religions are equally true. If Christianity were merely, as some consider it, the product of human aspiration and desire, even divinely kindled

[1] For a most illuminating examination of these "doctrines of grace" as over against Christianity see Professor Rudolf Otto's four lectures, *Christianity and the Indian Religion of Grace*, published by the Christian Literature Society, Madras.

aspiration, then the claim of equality with it made on behalf of such religions as Hinduism and Islam might be justified. But Christian men do not create the Christian facts; they receive them. For Christianity is not summed up in our reaching up to God, as the ethnic religions are. Christianity is specifically and essentially God's descent to us by Christ Jesus.

Further, we can only possess Christ Jesus, so that He shall be our Lord and our Saviour, when our eyes see Him and our affections lay hold of Him and He becomes ours by an inward process of assimilation. That involves that our message is wholly a message of the spirit, to be commended only in spiritual terms and to be appropriated solely by a spiritual response. The effect of a clear realization of this fact upon the methods we employ to commend our message must be profound. No methods of propaganda that are unspiritual, that are other than can convey the spirit and grace of Jesus Christ to the hearts and minds of men, may be employed by us. That is a principle that must govern all our missionary effort, and what it involves in regard to the means we use we must continually consider anew. The Christian message has these two aspects that must be ever before those entrusted with its proclamation: on the one hand its exaltation and urgency as a message not of our discovery but that has come down to us from God out of heaven, and on the other its spiritual appeal as a message that must win its way by its own beauty and its own power to charm and to convince.

Much of what has been said above of the character of the Christian message, and of what follows from

that character as to the missionary objective and missionary methods, is admirably suggested in some comments recently made by Mr Middleton Murry on the teaching of our Lord. Mr Middleton Murry is not an orthodox Christian, but he is a very sincere and honest witness to what the message of Christ effects upon his own spirit. Speaking of that message he protests that "the wisdom of Jesus is not sanity or common sense: it is wisdom." And no doubt he would agree that it is "wisdom that cometh from above." It conveys, he goes on, "a secret that could be understood by anyone who would be humble enough to discern it," that is to say, it is spiritually discerned. When we listen, for example, to the parable of the Prodigal Son, "something happens in our hearts. In them also a mystery is accomplished. We see visions and we dream dreams; we glimpse what love was once in one man's experience of God, and because it was, it *is*; it is born again in us, and our souls are born to receive it. But 'there's a mystery in it': the mystery of a wisdom before which both sanity and common sense must hide their heads."

The mystery here is the mystery of the operation of divine grace in the human heart. That the missionary must ever profoundly believe in and expect. Wherever he goes with his message God has been there with it before him. That is why reverence towards all religions and the fullest sympathy with all the strivings of the human heart towards the unknown God must be primary characteristics of our attitude to those among whom we work and whom we seek to serve. Especially must it be true of the missionary

of the Christian Gospel to such a people as the people of India that he must "reverence their reverences." We say with conviction with the old mystic, "the root in every man is Christ," and, we go on, "it is watered with His blood." To water the secret root in men's hearts with the blood of Christ, to draw forth its growth by the divine nourishment of His revealed and manifested love, shown in time and history on the Cross—that is the Christian missionary's task. It is certainly not easy to maintain this breadth and sincerity of sympathy with all religious longing and this reverence for it, while at the same time preserving, keen and exultant, the conviction of the Christian message as securely divine, the gift of God's grace. That is the path "narrow as a razor's edge," by which the messenger of Christ has to travel; such is the poise and balance of truth which he has to endeavour to preserve. "Earnestness without rigorism"—that is how Baron von Hügel describes it.[1] "The future of religion," he goes on, "indeed even already its present propagation in our poor old world, lies in that." The Christian missionary—especially the Christian missionary who is to guide India to-day through the dark wood—must possess this rare combination of qualities. He must welcome every print upon the soil of the Indian spirit of the feet of the Lord Jesus, indicating that He, unnamed, or strangely named and unrecognized, once passed along that road; but at the same time he must be sure, beyond all doubting, that he carries in his heart the highway to Zion.

[1] Baron von Hügel, *Selected Letters*, p. 315.

II

We have considered the Christian message which, we believe, has to be delivered to India, how its character and authority appear to us, especially as we review it in the light cast upon it by the troubled flame of India's spirit. It has not been possible, in that discussion, wholly to exclude consideration of the consequences in the temper and attitude of the messenger that the character and authority of the message should produce. If new lights have shone upon that message, making clearer certain aspects of it, some change and readjustment must follow in the messenger. And at the same time he is bound, in loyalty to his great persuasive task, to take into full account the mood and temper of those to whom he is "an ambassador on behalf of Christ." We must look now somewhat more closely at what consequences follow in the missionary's attitude.

The attitude of respect and sympathy towards all that is good and worthy in Indian religious life and thought is a primary demand that must be made of every messenger of Christ to this land of ancient religious aspiration and reflection. That is an attitude that is required of us, whatever the people may be to whom we desire to bear the Christian message. It is not policy that requires it but Christian principle. It is true at the same time that we are somewhat rudely reminded of our duty in this respect by the nationalist aggressiveness that is so active at the present time in India. It is peculiarly difficult, perhaps, for us of the Anglo-Saxon race, for us "of the hard

fibre," as Mahatma Gandhi describes us, to put aside our arrogance and patronage, especially in the presence of people who crouch before us. It seems as difficult for us to do this as it is for the Ethiopian to change his skin, yet it is not impossible, and the missionary must seek the divine grace that shall achieve it. The people to whom he speaks no longer crouch ; they no longer accept the foreigner's admonitions meekly. The new spirit often resents fiercely any criticism of what is evil in Hindu society and culture. Caste, for example, is explained and defended even by a man of the enlightenment of Professor Radhakrishnan. If no other weapon of defence is available, the *tu quoque* is always at hand and does excellent service.

The fact that that sensitive and resentful spirit is abroad is, no doubt, an added reason why we should treat Hindu life and thought with sympathy and respect, but it is not by any means the chief reason. It complicates the position by making it difficult for us, while welcoming and recognizing everything in Indian life that is good, to denounce frankly what is evil. There are things, of course, that must be denounced, evils like child-marriage and the dedication of girls in temples and the oppression of the outcaste. But the fact that the critic is a foreigner, and that this temper of nationalist pride is so much in the ascendant, makes it necessary to avoid anything that will have the effect of strengthening the forces of reaction, which are apt to be found in full alliance with nationalism. For that reason the foreign missionary, in his efforts to put down old

social evils, must endeavour to ally himself with the reforming elements in the country's life.

An illustration may be given of the sensitiveness to criticism of even the most enlightened—a sensitiveness due, no doubt, to the suspicion that the criticism is intended to humiliate. Recently a Christian journal referred to the injury done to high claims made in behalf of Hindu culture by practices like hook-swinging, occasionally found among the immigrant Indians in South Africa. The criticism was made with the best and friendliest intention, the purpose being to suggest that Hindu culture could, but for these minor aspects of it, hold its head high in South Africa and everywhere. But even a paper like the *Indian Social Reformer* showed violent resentment. " Is self-torture unknown to Christianity ? " it asked. " Perhaps there was more real Christianity in the world when men suffered self-torture than now when religion is reduced to comfortable dimensions " . . . and so on. The result is that it is often wiser to refrain from public condemnation, lest harm should be done instead of good. It is best of all when an Indian like Mr Gandhi denounces the evils of Hinduism as he has recently denounced the dedication of girls in Hindu temples. He has a right to say that Hindu temples are sometimes no better than brothels, for he knows the facts, and, as a Hindu, feels deeply the shame of it. The foreigner has not the same right, and his denunciations might have an effect that would be the opposite of what we desire. It is the same with regard to the evils of untouchability. The foreigners' censure is apt merely to produce angry

retorts as to our own social injustices. The missionary's task is to labour to create the love of purity and the loathing of impurity, the brotherhood and the sense of justice that will move the Indian people themselves to cleanse their land from these stains. When he has so fully proved his disinterestedness and the sincerity of his love for the people that he cannot be suspected of selfish motives or of the desire to discover faults in them, then only can he take up the role of the accuser. There are few among foreigners, whether missionaries or others, of whom it will be admitted that if they inflict wounds they are the wounds of a friend.

If the stubborn " imperialist " spirit of the westerner is to learn this new attitude ; if the method of sympathy and respect towards all that is good and that is from God in the religion and culture of India is to be adopted and maintained with sincerity : then it is necessary to understand Hinduism—or whatever the religion in question may be—to study its ideas, the long history of its growth, what it has achieved through its noblest spirits in the past. It must not be judged solely by its surface consequences, but by its inner spirit. For this purpose the missionary must know the language of the people by which they express their most intimate selves. He must make friends with them and show himself friendly, putting on no superior airs and feeling none, for there is no reason why he should feel them. It should not be necessary, to that end, that he should wear their clothes and eat their food. Some missionaries feel that these ways of identification with the people are

valuable, and, if they are able quite naturally to adopt them and adjust themselves to them and like them, then certainly it may be well for them to make use of this road to sympathy. We know, however, that these are only the outer garb and livery of friendship and brotherhood, and it is the possession of their essential spirit that is important.

There is, in fact, just one method that can never be objected to, a method that is as old as the days of our Lord's ministry on earth, and that will hold its place as the first and chiefest of all the methods of bringing His Kingdom till the world ends. That is the method of love, of friendship. Just as, on the one hand, it is true that every act or speech or attitude that outrages and insults the personality and that comes into conflict with the sense of personal honour and self-respect of this people shuts the door of their ears against the word that we preach, so, on the other hand, it is equally true that every foreign messenger who is knitting the hearts of the Indian people to his own, breaking down barriers, sweetening relationships, is in the vanguard of the battle of humanity and of the Kingdom of God.

What has been here emphasized in regard to our missionary methods might be summed up in the phrase "respect for personality." This is one of the central principles of the Christian faith. It is, accordingly, as we give full value to the individuals to whom we convey our message, recognizing their rights, respecting, honouring, loving them, that we shall convey our message to them in its fulness. There is no question that in India during the last twenty

or thirty years there has taken place a real discovery, or recovery, of personal values. Too often in former days an Indian might be seen laying his head in servility upon the foreign sahib's feet. Such acts inflamed still more the natural arrogance of the members of the ruling race. But to-day Indians of all classes are learning to stand upon their feet. It will be sad for India if a day comes when no one is willing to lay himself down in the dust in reverence before a man like Mahatma Gandhi; when no son is willing, like Keshub Chunder Sen, to put the dust of his mother's feet upon his head. No doubt there is a danger, in India, of exchanging servility for truculence, but still, with all deductions made, it remains true that there has been a real discovery of the rights and duties of personality, a real growth of manhood. In such a change the Christian missionary must rejoice, and with it, by his own personal attitude, he must co-operate.

In this connection there is a difference in ethical emphasis, which must be noted and weighed by the foreign missionary, between our western conception of the good man and the conception which has ruled for many a century in India. We of the West are naturally aggressive; the active virtues appeal more to us, and are more highly valued by us, than those that are passive and that have a higher place in the estimation of India. We see this, for example, in the view that is taken of anger in the two cases. We in the West value what we call righteous indignation as a noble quality: but in India, on the contrary, anger is reckoned one of the worst of sins, and it is doubtful

if it would ever be esteemed righteous. Among the "seven enemies," as they say, it ranks second, next after lust. The ideally good man of Hinduism is he who is always calm, unperturbed in spirit, equable in temper. There is no doubt, when we consider the matter, that into this contrast there enters a difference in natural disposition; and that the Christian ideal, which is rooted in nature, but is super-natural and super-racial, is something above both. Our righteous indignation is apt to be secretly controlled by our egotism even when we think it most disinterested, to be coloured by our natural passions and our native overbearingness. Indian patience and serenity and indifference are apt similarly to be tainted with lack of moral conviction, to be due in part just to anæmia and listlessness. But the Christian ideal—the love that beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, that seeketh not her own and that never faileth—that love transcends the ideal alike of the East and of the West. It cometh from above and is above all. It is in the Cross of Christ that we have this ideal presented to the world, and it is as we "become conformed unto His death," that we reach in ourselves, and exhibit to others, a love that will never invade in arrogance the personality of another, nor will pass him by in an indifference that pretends to spiritual exaltation.

We have to strip off the cumbering armour from our message and let it shine forth in its own quiet light. There must be no compulsion, on the one hand, nor the forcing in any way of the door of personality; nor, on the other hand, must there be improper inducement,

for both these methods are methods of force. It is further obvious that if our message is to prevail in the world to-day, and especially if it is to prevail in India, we must free it from the obscuration that is caused by the racial antagonisms and suspicions that are poisoning the air we breathe. These, more than anything else, create that mistrust in the midst of which the missionary has to discharge his task in India at the present time. Every foreigner is suspect, the missionary not excepted, and the first necessity, if he is to convey his message to its destination in men's hearts, is to break down that middle wall of partition. It has to be made clear that the missionaries of Christ Jesus are not apostles of British or American culture, nor of imperialism, nor yet of any invader who threatens those elements in India's heritage of which she may be justly proud. It is our part to preach, not "Christian civilization," but Christ Jesus. He, coming into the Indian scene, crossing the threshold of the Indian soul, will make what He finds there that is fair, more fair, taking away only what is unworthy. He will not quench the smoking flax but cause it to shoot up, "a brilliant spear of fire."

In our endeavour to understand Hinduism we have to try to understand it as it is actually at work in the minds and hearts of men and women round about us. We have to reach if we can to its actual springs, and to discover how far, and by what elements within it, it comforts the sad heart or strengthens the tempted to withstand temptation. The important thing to know is how the personalities of men and women are being moulded to-day by this ancient system.

What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow
Out of the stony rubbish?

There must be much " stony rubbish " in any doctrine and ceremonial that has flowed onward across so vast a space of time. Its past has its effect in what it is to-day, but it is what it is to-day that concerns us—what it is in lives refreshed and strengthened or chilled and petrified. What is its value ? we ask, and by the answer that that question receives, Hinduism or any religion stands or falls. We do not approach it as iconoclasts, but as those who desire to understand why men cleave to it, and what there is of real life and of the power to quicken within it still.

We do not want to misrepresent Hinduism : we do not want to assault it in the blindness of arrogance and contempt. We have to recognize that Hinduism is changing and we must rejoice if in that process of change it is ridding itself of evil and poisonous elements. Thus, for example, it is common, and entirely proper, that in dealing with Hinduism the missionary labels it as pantheism and sets over against it the case for theistic faith. But when such a charge is made against it the statement will at once be challenged and it will be strongly affirmed—to quote the words of the *Indian Social Reformer*—that " Hindu pantheism does not exclude the belief in a personal God." At a time when all the stubborn knots of Hindu doctrine are being loosened, it is to be expected that Hindu pantheism will be represented as being simply a deeply realized belief in the divine immanence. We have to admit freely the modifications that the demands of the

human heart have produced in Vedantic theory and that time and the Christian influences that are abroad are even now producing. When we hear, for example, of attempts such as are being made to introduce congregational worship into Hinduism, we should not say, " That is not your religion at all. You have no right to worship, for you are pantheists." On the contrary we should welcome and rejoice in these indications of the religious influences that are making themselves felt within the ancient system.

The foreigner, in fact, may frequently misinterpret Hinduism, deducing certain conclusions from its theory which may appear logical and yet which the deeper logic of experience may have modified in actual Hindu belief and practice. No one, one hopes, not even the author of *The Dynasts*, has ever lived the life indifferent to consequences, indifferent to good or ill, that seems to follow from a thoroughgoing pantheism and from a belief in the blind movements of the immanent Will,—

An automatic sense,
Unweeting why or whence.

There are as many Hinduisms as there are individual Hindus, and it is to the individual that the message of Christ has to be conveyed. The individual is very largely fashioned for good or ill by the system of thought and worship which forms so much of the atmosphere of his life, but at the last, as the message of the Jerusalem Council reminds us, " we speak as men to men "—not to them as adherents of any system—and we invite them, as such, " to share with

us the pardon and the life that we have found in Christ." [1]

Let us not set up a bogey Hinduism or an exaggerated Islam and then strike it down amidst our own applause. Let us not take a delight in depreciating and denouncing the religion of those to whom we are sent. There are evils in it that we must denounce, but it must be done by one who is constrained to do so by a real love for men and not in the pride of superior wisdom or virtue. Mr Gandhi tells us in regard to himself in his childhood what is true of many. " I developed," he says, " a sort of dislike for Christianity. And for a reason. In those days Christian missionaries used to stand in a corner near the High School and hold forth, pouring abuse on Hindus and their gods. I could not stomach this." No doubt his recollection has exaggerated the facts, but that is the impression created in this boy's mind and its effect upon him. Much is required, and rightly required, of those who would be zealous for the Lord of Hosts.

Thou to wax fierce in the cause of the Lord . . .
Anger and zeal and the joy of the brave
Who bade thee to feel, sin's slave?

That applies to any preacher of righteousness. How much more must it apply to those who come to take away from a people such consolation as their religion has hitherto afforded them! We can only do it if we possess an unchallengeable conviction of the supremacy of the message with which we have been

[1] *The World Message of Christianity*, p. 15.

entrusted as a message from God to the hungry souls of men. We can only do it if we feel that the love of Christ so constrains us that we cannot do otherwise. We shall prefer not to denounce but to beseech, not to challenge their evil but to charm by Christ's good. To return to the words of the greatest of missionaries —" We are ambassadors on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us."

III

There is still something that requires to be said, before we conclude consideration of the task of the foreign mission and its messengers in the India of to-day, as to the relation of the missionary to the Indian Christian Church and his bearing towards its members. Christianity is not an individualism and by no individual can the too vast orb of its fate be upborne. It is the Church that is the ship to which it has been committed to carry across the *bhavasagar*, the ocean of the world, that infinitely precious freight, Christ and His fortunes. That seems a startling claim to make, and it reveals to us how great a faith our Lord placed in the frail, erring, ignorant company that is everywhere His Church. It reveals to us how great the Church is in the divine purpose and rebukes us for our petty thoughts of it. Our thoughts have been men's thoughts, not God's thoughts, and especially so, perhaps, our thoughts of the Church of Christ in India. For that reason it is of the utmost importance that the missionary should keep himself free from this disloyalty. He must magnify the Church,

not as an organization or an institution, bearing this name or that, but as the body of Christ Jesus, the continuation of His incarnation, the company, within the land of India, of His redeemed.

If that is what the Church in India is, then she must receive our reverence. We have already seen that in recent years a demand has arisen within the Church for freedom from the bondage in which, it seemed to some of the Christian leaders, she had been held too long by her foreign teachers. The spirit that has aroused them to make this claim may often have been political rather than religious, aroused rather by a desire to control their own affairs than by a desire to be themselves under the direct control of Him who is the Church's Head. The Church is far too often viewed after the analogy of a government department and its pastors as if they were salaried agents. For that attitude in the members of the Church, the foreign missionary is not wholly free from blame. He was apt sometimes to lord it over the little company of believers and their pastor, and by his dominance to dwarf them. As we have seen, the claim that the Church shall be, as far as possible, her own mistress under Christ, and shall fashion her own faith under the direction of His Spirit, has now been in principle conceded. The Church, it is now fully recognized, is central to the whole missionary movement: the foreign missionary's part is not to rule it, but to serve it. These things have been recognized in principle: it does not, however, follow that they have been realized in practice. It is hard to unlearn an evil tradition. The method of the dictator is often

the easiest way to avoid abuses, to bar out error, to maintain an appearance of concord, but it is not the way to promote spiritual growth and to create spiritual insight and a real and understanding unity. These will only come when the missionary co-operates and does not control, when he stands "an hand-breadth off" giving the Church room to live and breathe, to err and to turn back again from error, to learn through failure, as we all must learn, to seek the love and the wisdom that come to her from above. Here, as before, the missionary must be taught by the experience of his great forerunner, St Paul. The Corinthian Church was a poor, foolish, distracted company and St Paul their anxious and scarcely less distracted mentor. He had all the instincts that might have made him dominate and coerce them—the sense of the Church's ideal so lamentably remote from what they were, the eager spirit, hard to be restrained. But he controls his eagerness. "Not," he says to that poor, erring company, "that we lord it over your faith—no, we co-operate for your joy: you have a standing of your own in the faith." [1]

The Indian Church has a standing of its own, too, in the faith. Of that standing no missionary, however able and however earnest, has any right to deprive it. What has already been said of the spirit that is above all necessary for the missionary as a messenger of Christ to the non-Christians, namely, that he be a real lover of men, is true still more fully of the missionary in his relation to the Indian Church. It is often easy to browbeat the humble companies

[1] 2 Cor. i. 24 (Moffatt's translation).

of illiterate people that make up so large a proportion of this Church; but to do so is to inflict a grievous injury. To take and hold to the right road for the strengthening of the character of the Christian people requires endless patience and faith, and these every missionary must strive increasingly to win. It is possible, of course, that the members of a Church in the earliest stages of its discovery of what Christ requires of them and is ready to do for them may need the discipline of children. It is said of a notable missionary who worked in South India more than a century ago that he used to beat the village Christians with his own hands when they needed chastisement, and yet when he sailed away from India and his ship was lost, these people whom he had thus corrected in love believed that he was taken up in a chariot to heaven. But all the same that example cannot be commended for imitation.

St Francis Xavier had not a little of the haughty Spanish hidalgo about him, but he had a heart of passionate love for little children and for Christ in them, and his instruction to his priests is such as every missionary should take to himself in his relation especially with his Indian fellow-Christians. "I charge you earnestly," he says, "to make yourselves loved wherever you go or are, doing kind deeds to all and always leaving loving words behind you, if possible, for thus you will produce much fruit in their souls." [1] And again he writes to his friends in Europe, "Though the preachers you send here may not have

[1] E. A. Robertson, *Francis Xavier: Knight Errant of the Cross*, p. 162.

much learning, for the love of our Lord let them be men of great life."

The missionary must thus endeavour to create in the companies of baptized Christians the Church-consciousness, the sense that they belong to a holy society and that Christ Himself is with them as their Guide and Guardian and the Lifter-up of their heads. That this consciousness is awaking among Christians in India is one of the most hopeful indications that we can discern for the coming of the Kingdom of God. If it has been slow to come, one reason, no doubt, is that the foreign guardians have been often slow to surrender their authority and have dwarfed and stunted growth. The strong movement for union of the Churches has as one of the stimuli that are impelling it forward, the desire that the Indian Church shall have more strength, and a better opportunity to shape its own course and realize its own identity. It is for the foreign missionary to watch the process, ready indeed " to co-operate for their joy," but keeping his hand from the tiller while the ship leaves port and seeks the glory and the danger of the open sea.

The making of a Christian Church is not something that can come to pass suddenly in a moment. It is a process of the slow building up of experience in fellowship, of the discovery and the appropriation of the resources that are available in Christ. And in all this process the co-operation with the younger Churches in brotherhood and affection of the foreign missionary, possessing as he does his older Christian tradition, will be of the utmost value to the Church.

He, remembering that the Church is central to the whole missionary situation, will keep always before him the goal of the Church's growth and strengthening. The young Church, as it is able, is to take part in, and ultimately to take over as its own province, the guidance of the missionary enterprise and the task of the evangelization of its own land and its own people. If that be so, the missionary must seek to keep that aim in view while he shapes and chooses the missionary methods that he in the meantime has mainly to guide.

Accordingly he must now, far more than in the past, set before himself the ideal of simplicity. Simplicity is a natural accompaniment and fruit of spirituality, and the more fully the missionary methods that are employed are spiritual, the more they will be free from elaboration and display. We have to remember that the Indian Church is a poor Church and that its members can ill afford to maintain costly edifices and institutions. Some institutions must necessarily be expensive—especially hospitals and colleges—and these, if they are to be Christian institutions, will have to be maintained preponderatingly by the contributions of the Churches of the West that are comparatively so much richer than the Churches of this land. But whenever it is possible we must seek after simplicity, and at the same time we must do all we can to see to it that simplicity is united with beauty. Beauty is a quality of God and a means to the godlike life, and India has her own sense of beauty of which we must not rob her, and which she has known how to combine in the past

in the persons of some of her saints with simplicity of life, with charm of rhythm, of sound and austere dignity of deportment, all of which we must seek to recall to her people and to preserve in them.

We have limited our consideration here to that which is central in the relationship of the foreign mission and the foreign missionary with the Christian Church in India. From a spirit instinct with brotherhood and service and ever magnifying the Church, all else will follow. There is, however, one remaining admonition that we may accept from an observer of great insight and sympathy, lest by failure in the direction he indicates we do injury to the Church, which it is our aim to help onward in all spiritual growth. Professor Rudolf Otto tells us that during a recent visit to India an impression made upon him was that missions were " very strongly secularized." Explaining further this serious criticism, he says in a private letter: " It became clear to me in many places on my tour that the cultural tasks on the mission field were now coming into the foreground far before evangelization strictly so called. And no one will be able to doubt that there is a great danger in this for the strictly missionary task. . . . I will gladly admit that the present situation, perhaps, in the lands of the East demands first and foremost that with full devotion an amelioration of the economic and intellectual situation should be reached, in order to prepare the ground for the deeper-reaching operations of the strictly religious message. And I have far too much respect for the devoted work in education, care for the sick, social work, and spiritual and

physical culture that is being done, to venture to injure them by criticism."

This is a warning to which we must give heed. We have seen that by far the greatest contribution that the Churches of the West can make to the Indian Church lies in the spiritual strengthening that their fellowship may bring to her. They are to be not the directors of the younger Churches but "channels of life ever growing as it is ever given."[1] If their operations are becoming secularized then indeed these channels will be closed. The foreign missionary must not be viewed as primarily an expert in education or in medical science, or in industrial or rural "uplift," or even in theological knowledge. His primary function must still be to be to the Church, even as to the non-Christian people, an "ambassador on behalf of Christ"—an ambassador of the experience of God that has come through the centuries to the older Churches of the West. As star vibrates light to star, so there must be this interchange of testimony and experience between West and East. In this lies the unification of the Holy Catholic Church, rooted and grounded in a knowledge of God that is varied as the souls of men but also one with the oneness of God.

The supremacy and uniqueness of the Christian Gospel lies in this, that within it can find a home all the energies and activities of brain and hand, the plans and schemes of man's devising for the betterment of human life. But they must be so subordinated to the divine purpose, and so harmonized by love, that

[1] The Jerusalem Findings as Related to India, p. 46.

the whole shall be spiritual and not secular. We have said that the first quality demanded of the foreign missionary is sympathy, and the second, perhaps, simplicity, as far as this is possible in the methods of work that the foreign mission uses and in the life that the foreign missionary leads. But beneath and enfolding these and all other high qualities in him, there must be a clear and continuous discernment of the spiritual goal towards which all his efforts are directed. He will not disdain means, nor forget that those whom he serves are human creatures with frail bodies and with groping minds, but he will always seek to keep shining before him God's end and purpose for India within His Kingdom. In a land so full of sickness and poverty and ignorance the road there may and must lead through the midst of much secular service, but what of the way to the end? The end crowns all.

EPILOGUE

WHITHER?

When Dante found himself astray in the dark wood and his heart was pierced with dread he looked up at the mountain facing him and saw

> *. . . his shoulders broad*
> *Already vested with that planet's beam,*
> *Who leads all wanderers safe through every way.*

As we have accompanied India seeking her path in like circumstances, our hearts also have been pierced with dread. Will she ever emerge from this tangled maze and find the straight road to God? Will the sun rise and the day break for her, too? Our prophecies may be built only on our hopes, and yet we cannot refrain from some forecast and conjecture.

We have tried to measure the influences—gusts of passion or languid stagnant airs—that are abroad throughout the wide extent of India, here calling up a hurricane, there scarcely stirring the surface of the inert waters. The range of our survey has been so vast, the varieties of race and circumstance and culture included within it are so many, that no generalization in regard to the whole Indian situation can be of any value. We can only note an eddy in

this direction or in that, while as to the direction in which the whole is moving we remain uncertain and perplexed. We have observed the turmoil and unrest that three generations of western education have created in the minds of a minority, so that

> *piety and fear,*
> *Religion to the gods, peace, justice, truth . . .*
> *Decline to their confounding contraries*
> *And let confusion live.*

For long these waters were merely restless and turbid. The educated youth of India, as one thoughtful observer from among their elders said of them, had no steam to carry them to any port, and no map to guide them. Then suddenly there came to them the nationalist passion bringing energy and eagerness and clamour, if not yet the power to realize, or even the clearness of sight to discern, their aims. But while these whirlpools of activity agitate the wide waters, there are still, as we have seen, vast stagnant stretches of the life of India, stirred—if at all—by wholly different agitations, the always urgent needs of the hungry body, the nightmare terror of the half-awakened soul. But there is, further, as we have seen, what is most significant of all to us in our analysis of the soul of India—the fact of the presence, both within the group of intellectuals and within the inert masses, of the Christian Church. This is for us the differentia of the Indian situation, so baffling and obscure; this is, we believe, the clue to its disentanglement.

We may attach, perhaps, too much significance to

that presence. The old conception—what one may consider the Victorian view—of human progress was inclined to trust with easy confidence to natural forces to carry the race to higher levels. For instance, Sir Alfred Lyall believed that "all the English need do is to keep the peace and clear the way," and a force that worked like gravitation—what he calls "the rising tide of intellectual advancement"—would do the rest.[1] These easy hopes have been shattered for us to-day. The British government was never so wholly "impartial" and aloof as Sir Alfred Lyall's description would suggest. Its greatest administrators coveted for themselves and their administration—as Lord Curzon in a famous speech said he coveted for himself—to be described as having loved righteousness and hated iniquity. But if India is to rise to the height of her calling in days to come it must be through a clearer and more convinced acceptance of the guidance and the government of God, and that the Church of Christ within her borders may supply. It should do so, not by any political power it can exercise but by acting as a regenerative influence in the moral and spiritual life of the land. It may, as Mr Arthur Mayhew suggests, "act as a spiritual power-house, from which ultimately all the force required for initiating and carrying through reforms must be derived." [2]

"An essential feature of such a 'power-house,'" Mr Mayhew goes on, "will be a Christian system of

[1] Sir A. Lyall's *Asiatic Studies: The Religious Situation in India.*

[2] Mayhew, *Christianity and the Government of India*, p. 246.

education, recognized by the State," but not identified with the secular government system. Mr Mayhew appears to look forward to a Christian educational system which shall be under Christian direction and which will thus, in a free atmosphere, as over against the growing secularism, reveal the possibilities of an education that seeks the highest spiritual ends. This is an important suggestion and one to which attention should be directed.[1] Can the forces of religious faith which the Christian Church may be held to represent be gathered about that centre in the days to come so as to deliver the land from the devastations of unbelief? It should not, indeed, be only the avowed members of the Christian Church who range themselves on this side. There are as well many, we believe, in all the provinces of India who make Christ their ideal in their own private lives, though they have never separated themselves formally from their ancestral faith, who are even endeavouring secretly to walk in faith and dependence upon Him. This buried Church may one day come forth from the catacombs in which they hide, ready to support the declared adherents of the Christian faith. By whatever means such an alliance may be achieved a serious effort should be made to invite the sincere followers of the non-Christian religions—as the Findings of the Jerusalem Council invited them—to co-operate with Christians, " holding fast to faith in the unseen and eternal in face of the growing materialism of the

[1] It is interesting to note that there is at the present time a movement beginning in India in favour of the formation of a Roman Catholic University.

world." [1] An increasing number may, as the forces of unbelief discover themselves, agree with Principal Zakir Hussain of Delhi in his frank recognition of what these facts demand. "The religious situation in India," he says, "does not differ materially when considered from the point of view of the various religious denominations. For the salient fact of the Indian religious situation is the war between belief and unbelief, religion and irreligion, God and the Devil, the ideal and the material." There may then become possible that "mobilization of the forces of belief and unbelief" which he urges as so greatly needed in "this growingly irreligious land."

If such an alliance is to be contemplated it is necessary that we first be sure that the Church in India is securely rooted in a living faith in Christ, a faith that is both an experience that contents the soul and a formulated system in which the mind can rest. The Church in India will have the right to call these kindred spirits to her side only if she herself possesses a spiritual assurance in the strength of which she can strengthen others. It may be possible to find ways of grappling to her these fellow-soldiers in the warfare of the spirit. At the same time, while inviting such co-operation, it must be made plain that the Christian Church desires everyone to go with her all the way to the Goal which she herself has reached. We believe that "all the good of which men have conceived is fulfilled and secured in Christ," [2] and that therefore India cannot have her full good until

[1] *The World Mission of Christianity*, p. 14.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 14.

she possesses Him. We must not conceal or diminish our supreme estimate of His worth for the world, but in the war between God and Mammon, between Materialism and Religion, we dare not reject any ally that comes to the help of the Lord against the mighty.

There is no need more imperious at the present time in India than that of Christian men of deep conviction and great intellectual insight who will weld together into one system the truth as it is in Jesus and such truth as has been revealed to Indian eyes through the ages of the Indian quest. It is not necessary at this period to stay to prove that revelations of truth have been made by the divine Spirit to human spirits so unwearied in their mental labour, so intense in their desire to draw near to God. But, alas, it is as little necessary to prove that along with these visitations from on high, in India as elsewhere, there have been upsurgences that have corrupted and deformed the truth revealed. It is for this reason that the test of Christ is required if so be that we shall be able to separate the precious from the vile. Christianity is no syncretism, no group of ideas externally wired together into a system. It is a living body of truth, of which Christ Himself is the life and breath. Accordingly the Indian Christian St Paul or St John, who with intellectual passion or mystical insight will build a house of belief which the Indian spirit can inhabit, will take from his Indian heritage certain ideas which, because they are true, are Christian, and by their means will make his edifice all the more dear and familiar to the Indian people and yet none the less

on that account a place for the whole world to dwell in.

The main framework of the dominant Hindu philosophy must undoubtedly be shattered, and its controlling doctrines rejected as deeply hostile to the Christian conviction and the Christian hope. What is called *Advaita*—the monistic view attainable only in a universe where all is unreality and illusion—lies behind all the inertia and indifference that have made of India throughout so many centuries a fen of stagnant waters. India can only be born again if she recovers, as under the guidance of Christ Jesus she surely shall, the conviction of human freedom and of the reality and significance of moral effort and struggle. Over against Hindu monism, with its temper of passivity and despair, stands for the Christian the doctrine of divine transcendence, demanding and making possible for man a life of moral heroism and moral growth and drawing him ever up and on. The Hindu has seen by divine intuition that man must attain redemption from the world, and he has sought it with passion, but he has missed his way to the goal. That way is the way of Christ, the way of love and righteousness. The passion of his desire will still, we trust, possess him when his feet have been set at last on the right road.

There are other deep instincts of the Hindu spirit, some of which the Indian Christian thinker will bring with him into the Church of Christ and which he will build into its walls. It is by their mystical intuitions rather than by their philosophical interpretations that the ancient Indian sages have made men their debtors,

contributing to our vision of the whole of truth some supremely precious glimpses of the real.

As we dream towards the Indian future we may note some of those ideas that we can see to be built into the City of God which is rising, and yet to rise, within that land. There is, for example, the belief that has been India's through all the ages in the super-sensual as the ultimately real. India will surely never lose hold of this conviction. The *Atman*, the Self within the universe—abstract and shadowy as it is in Hindu thinking—is the substance of truth in the midst of a changing and seductive world, and the value of every possession that man has lies in its relation to that, "ageless, deathless, sorrowless, hungerless, thirstless." [1] "This Self is dearer than a son, dearer than substance, dearer than all beside, more inward." [2] If inwardness means to them often only emptiness, still we have here an endeavour to reach beyond the sensual and the seen, and in this desire lies the soul and nerve of all religion. If the belief in the Atman should perish from India, the root of all her long spiritual endeavour will have withered and died.

Along with this there is as well the instinct that India has ever held by, that the self within is one—even if it be only in the form of a wraith—with the Self that pervades the universe. This coming together may have been for them the meeting of two shadows, but yet they meet and the Indian mind holds by their ultimate kinship. Here again we have the form, if

[1] Chāndogya Upanishad, VIII. 7.
[2] Brihadāranyaka Upanishad, I. 4.

not the substance, of a truth which is vital to religion. The kinship of God and man—it is a belief that may assume the guise of a colourless pantheism or of a too crudely coloured emotionalism, but apart from the faith of such a kinship the life of religion cannot even begin to be. We say indeed, "Man is not God but has God's ends to serve." We believe in One who, being Himself the Son of God, has given us, of His grace, the right and the power to be also sons of God. These Christian convictions reach out in moral meaning and creative energy far beyond the Indian monistic affirmation; but the Indian affirmation lies within them. There is that in us and in the Supreme Spirit which is of the same stuff, and this India has always believed and, we trust, will continue to believe.

These are truths that are writ large across the spiritual history of India, and, vague as their message often is and remote from life and its needs, yet they contain in them certain essentials of religious belief and have preserved a testimony of the Spirit that has never wholly perished. "The spirit of man is a candle of the Lord"—and this candle in the wind still gives its pale illumination in India, an undying flame that it must be our constant endeavour to keep glowing, but that is not clear enough to light men to an assured trust in God. For that there must be the reinforcement of the divine grace, the discovery of Christ. "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." The twilight of conjecture must pass

in India, as everywhere, into the full and splendid day of the divine manifestation.

When this comes, what is it that is added to these precious things of the Indian heritage so that they not only remain undestroyed but are made far clearer and richer and more sure? There is gained, in exchange for the doctrine of *Maya*,[1] so destructive of purpose and of effort, the assurance of the reality of time as the very stuff of eternity. The incarnation of the eternal Son of God makes manifest to us that the life of man of which He took hold is no mockery, but a vessel into which can be poured an eternal significance. We are not left to seek for that of which we can only say, "It is not, it is not," and, seeking it, to forsake love and the burdens of our brothers' sorrows and the joy of fellowship, whether it be with our brother or with God. These are indeed the realities of the spirit and the links that unite us to the Self-Existent One. It is the Incarnation and the Cross that make vivid and real to us the Param Atman—the Supreme Spirit—that otherwise empty outline, making Him "dearer than a son, dearer than all beside"; and that reveal His kinship with that other atman, the self within, who is indeed "ageless, deathless, sorrowless, thirstless," but who is so because he has entered into fellowship with the Father of his spirit. "This poor little shelter of reeds, with the Absolute ever burning down upon it; this poor little boat on the sea of the Infinite—God took pity on them, quite apart from Death and the Fall. He gave us the comfort of His tender, strong humanity

[1] The doctrine that the material world is illusion.

against the crushing opposition of the pure time-and-spaceless Eternal and Absolute of Himself." [1] This is what we bring to the negations—deep and moving negations—of Hinduism, believing that, as the Incarnation reveals it to us, "time is the mercy of Eternity."

If the Church of Christ—younger and older, Indian and foreign—can by faithful and self-effacing testimony bear such a witness to the super-sensual Reality in this land, India should lose no part of the wealth of wisdom and insight laid up for her by the rishis and seers of her past, nor yet should she be overwhelmed by the tide of nationalism sweeping in upon her from the West. She will learn that the calm of indifference is not life's crown, that that crown is the "strength unsevered from tranquillity," which is Christ Jesus, and which, through Him, may become hers.

As one realizes how much the beautiful and the base are mingled in the civilizations of every people, how much that is supremely precious, along with what is vile, has been built up by the experience, the reflection and the aspiration of a people so finely touched to the finest issues as is the ancient race that has dreamed and desired in India through the ages, we must feel more and more how grave is the danger lest we bring injury to the beautiful and gracious elements in such a heritage. Especially is it difficult for us upstart peoples of the West to deal wisely with a soul so deeply planted in the Unseen, so haunted by dreams of the ideal as is the soul of India. We

[1] Baron von Hügel, *Selected Letters*, p. 93.

must, indeed, tread softly lest we, clumsy intruders, tread on her dreams. With what care, therefore, must we seek to bring to her, not our own notions, but the spirit and the mind of Christ. "He that cometh from above is above all," and He is the Way and the Goal for all the groping, journeying families of mankind.

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PART I—NON-CHRISTIAN INDIA

CHAPTER I

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